A Companion to Gregory the Great

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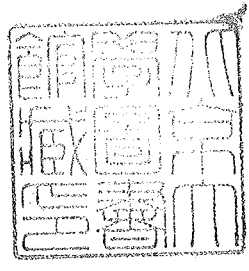
A Companion to Gregory the Great

Edited by

Bronwen Neil and Matthew Dal Santo



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To Robert Markus

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ep.	*Epistola*
Epp.	*Epistolae*
l.	line
ll.	lines
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place
n.s.	new series

Editions

ACO	Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum	
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum continuatio medievalis	
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum series graeca	
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum series latina	
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum	
GCS	Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller	
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni opera	
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae historica	
	AA	Auctores antiquissimi
	Chron. Min.	Chronica minora
	Epp.	Epistolae
	SS	Scriptores
	SSRL	Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum
	SSRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
PG	Patrologia graeca	
PL	Patrologia latina	
SC	Sources chrétiennes	

Works of Gregory

Dial.	*Dialogorum libri IV de miraculis patrum italicorum* (SC 251, 260, 265)
HEv.	*Homiliae in Evangelia* (CCSL 141)
HEz.	*Homiliae in Hiezechielem* (CCSL 142)

Cant. *In canticum canticorum* (CCSL 144)
I Reg. *In I librum Regum* (CCSL 144)
Mor. *Moralia in Iob* (CCSL 143, 143A, 143B)
Reg. *Registrum epistolarum* (CCSL 140 and 140A)
RP *Regula pastoralis* (SC 381 and 382)

Other Ancient/Medieval Works

Augustine, *De civ. Dei* *De civitate Dei*
Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* *Enarrationes in Psalmos*

Gregory of Tours

HF *Historia Francorum*

HE *Historia Ecclesiastica*
LP *Liber Pontificalis*
LPR *Liber Pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*

Paul the Deacon

HL *Historia Langobardorum*

Reference Works

RAC *Realenzyklopädie für Antike und Christentum*
RE *Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. Pauly-Wissowa
TRE *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*

Other abbreviations of works as in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.*

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EDITORS' PREFACE

A companion to Gregory the Great should be wide-ranging and gather together the best of scholarship—old and new—on the subject in an interesting format. We have aimed to assemble a range of chapters that address the best of Gregorian scholarship over the past 200 years. The recent 1400-year anniversary in 2004 of Gregory's death makes this all the more timely. The most obvious question for a volume like this to answer is: What made Gregory "great"? While the Middle Ages had no difficulty recognizing Gregory among its most authoritative points of reference, modern readers have not always found this question as easy to answer.[1] As with any great figure, however, there are two sides to Gregory—the historical and the universal. This handbook hopes to capture Gregory's "greatness" from both of these angles: what made Gregory stand out among his contemporaries (as well as wherein he did not); and what is unique about Gregory's contribution (preserved above all in his literary works) to the development of human thought and described human experience.

The Historical Gregory

Regarding the historical Gregory, recent scholarship has focused on questions of continuity—was Gregory a late antique leader, or a medieval one? A Roman bishop or Byzantine patriarch? A classical scholar or Christian exegete? A spiritual teacher or pragmatic ecclesiastical manager? The spiritual and practical challenges of 6th-century life in Rome emerge as the two driving forces behind his pontificate.[2] Born around the year 540, as a youth Gregory was probably forced to leave Rome with his aristocratic family in the wake of Justinian's reconquest and the resulting Gothic Wars. He would have returned to a city where the infrastructure and social institutions lay in ruins after successive sieges and waves of plague and famine. Rome's precarious situation was underscored from 568 by the

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[1] See, for example, James J. O'Donnell, "The Holiness of Gregory the Great," in *Gregory the Great: A Symposium*, ed. John Cavadini, Notre Dame Studies in Theology 2 (Notre Dame, IN, 1995), pp. 62–81.

[2] For Gregory's life and times, see above all Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997).

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[2] For Gregory's life and times, see above all Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997).

Lombard invasion of Italy. Gregory's profound commitment to the ideal of a Christian empire and the general sense of Rome's abandonment by Constantinople shaped his ambivalent attitude towards the empire and its rulers. Rome's relationship with the church of Constantinople had also been battered by the *Three Chapters* controversy.

Sent in 579 to the eastern capital as an *apocrisiarius*, Gregory became familiar with the important players of the age, and carried the day in his debate on the resurrection of the body with Eutychius of Constantinople. On his return to Rome, Gregory had hoped to return to a life of contemplation in the Monastery of St Andrew which he had founded on his family estate on the Caelian Hill. However, with his election in 590 to the pontificate following floods that devastated the city of Rome, he had to turn his mind to more prosaic problems: how to feed, shelter, and manage a city that had been beaten by war and natural disasters, as well as governing its ecclesiastical hierarchy and that of the wider church of Italy and Sicily? Gregory's many letters on these subjects have been made more accessible as a scholarly resource by Dag Norberg's edition of the *Registrum*, published in 1982, and John Martyn's three-volume English translation, which appeared in 2004. Over the centuries, the practical wisdom and knowledge of Roman and canon law found in these letters contributed mightily to a tradition that saw in Gregory not only a great Roman administrator in the classical style (so much so that Gregory has emerged, on occasion, as the "last of the Romans"), but also the first truly medieval pope whose policies laid the material and organizational foundations for an autonomous Republic of St Peter. These assumptions have since been questioned, but even if opinions of Gregory were controversial in the city he helped administer in the immediate aftermath of his death in 604, it is clear that by the 9th century, at the latest, this aspect of Gregory's "greatness" had been firmly established.

Yet Gregory has always been more than merely a historical personality, leaving behind in his literary works a legacy that exerted a powerful influence generations after his death. Throughout the Middle Ages, Gregory was acknowledged as a master of the spiritual life. The *Moralia in Iob*, a commentary on the Old Testament Book of Job and Gregory's longest work, was copied and circulated for centuries across medieval Europe. In it, Gregory explored the nature of the soul's yearning for and ascent towards God, which he depicted as a two-steps-forward, one-step-back process at whose heart lay an attitude of compunction (*compunctio*), or repentance. For Gregory believed that the closer the soul in contemplation of the Scriptures approached the divine light, the more conscious it grew

of its own sinfulness, hence its need to turn again to tears, repentance, and compunction. Thanks to God's mercy in Christ (typically, in Gregory's thought, the "Mediator" between God and man), these tears of compunction served to inaugurate anew the soul's path of ascent, which Gregory was apt to call "conversion" (*conversio*). While many, if not all, of these themes can be found in the patristic tradition he inherited, Gregory stands out in the intensity of his focus on the interior life and his desire to weave the doctrinal and ascetic wisdom of the patristic age into a sustained account of the Christian's spiritual experience. As Claude Dagens, one of Gregory's most distinguished recent students, put it:[3]

> [Gregory] desires to analyze minutely the inward life of the soul that seeks God. This is nothing less than the effort to seize the movement of man's passage towards God, a psychological and moral exploration of the Christian life.

Added to this is Gregory's great skill in universalizing his own experience as well as his discussion of it: his works are free of the historically contingent in a way that Augustine's or Jerome's are not.[4] It is easy to appreciate how a work of such themes, thus handled, appealed to monastic audiences long after Gregory's immediate readership had passed away.[5] In the words of the 7th-century Isidore of Seville: "Blessed and more than blessed is he who has been able to know all his [sc. Gregory's] works."[6]

His appeal to monastic audiences throughout the Middle Ages can be further explained by the fact that Gregory was himself the first monk to become pope. While Gregory was a great believer in the monastic life, he did not, however, believe that contemplation alone was enough to secure the soul's progress. For Gregory, the *vita contemplativa* led naturally to a compromise with the *vita activa*, which he believed was perfected in discipleship, the care of souls. Gregory believed that the movement from meditation to contemplation and thence to pastoral care or discipleship is immediate and compelling—and arguably for all his emphasis on the soul's passage towards God, it is not so much mystical contemplation that

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[3] Claude Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand. Culture et expérience chrétiennes* (Paris, 1977), p. 24: "il désire analyser minutieusement la vie intérieure de l'âme qui cherche Dieu. Ce n'est rien d'autre qu'un effort pour saisir le mouvement continu et concret de l'homme vers Dieu, une exploration psychologique et morale de la vie chrétienne."

[4] O'Donnell, "Holiness of Gregory the Great," p. 68.

[5] See further Jean Leclerq, *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu: Initiation aux auteurs monastiques du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1957), pp. 30–9.

[6] Isidore of Seville, *De viris illustribus*, 40.50: "Felix tamen et nimium felix qui omnia studiorum eius potuit conoscere." Cited in Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand*, p. 17.

stands at the centre of his reflection and work as much as discipleship, pastoral care and morals, the formation of Christian character. Whether he was writing to friends at court in Constantinople or other monks, these concerns show themselves again and again in his letters. He expressed his ideas in this regard most fully in his short tract, the *Regula Pastoralis*, or *Rule of Pastoral Care*, a work which in its practical theology remained almost unique in the history of Christian literature until the modern period.[7] While it may seem natural today to consider such pastoral care a normal part of the role of the Christian priesthood, Gregory was among the first to insist on its centrality and theorize about its practice.[8] With its gentleness and psychological sensitivity, Gregory's *Rule of Pastoral Care* rightly deserves its place among the Christian classics.

Yet, with the exceptions of his *Rule of Pastoral Care* and, to a lesser extent, the *Dialogues*, Gregory chose to write in an allegorical style that appeals little to modern tastes. In his commentaries on Ezekiel and the Song of Songs, Gregory returned to many of the topics familiar to readers of his *Moralia*—contemplation, compunction, conversion. Through the allegorical techniques Gregory loved, the mysterious words of the Scriptures allowed these ideas to be explored again and again from a multitude of angles, without ever exhausting all the possibilities of their meaning. His *Homilies on the Gospels* performed a similar operation on many of Jesus' parables and even the *Dialogues*, it has been argued, represent an allegorical reading of the miracles of the saints. Perhaps this love of allegory, more than any other factor, has deterred Gregory's latter-day readers. Gregory rarely, if ever, develops a subject in a truly linear way in the manner of Augustine or Jerome, to name two of the most important influences on Gregory's own formation.[9] Guided always by the words of Scripture he is commenting on, Gregory takes his reader on a roundabout journey that demands a sustained effort to persevere with its frequent sense of repetition and arbitrariness. Equally difficult for modern audiences, the supernatural impinges heavily and constantly on his thought, from the saints and their miracles to the hand of God itself which Gregory takes to stand behind everything that happens in Creation, whether for good or ill.

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[7] Robert Gillet, "Grégoire le Grand," *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* 21 (1986) cols 1387–420 at col. 1408.

[8] George E. Demacopoulos, *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (Notre Dame, IN, 2007), p. 134.

[9] John Moorhead, *Gregory the Great*, The Early Church Fathers (Abingdon – New York, 2005), p. 12.

As a result, he is apt to attribute to God what we would very often prefer to leave to chance or the devil.[10]

For all this, Gregory was not a speculative or systematic theologian and it has been noted before that "in the history of Christian theology his place is secondary".[11] But if Gregory's greatness is to be found anywhere, it is in his awareness that the human heart is itself no less a maze than the Scriptural mysteries he was so fond of allegorizing and that it requires all the discretion (*discretio*) of the spiritual director, trained in contemplation and perfected in the care of souls, to navigate its secrets. At the end of the 13th century, Boniface VIII sealed Gregory's status by naming him fourth Doctor of the Church, thereby elevating him to the same status as the great 4th-century fathers, Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome.[12] Although Gregory was unusual among Roman pontiffs in attracting fame in the Greek Church, it was above all in the medieval West that his reputation was made.

This, however, returns us briefly to the historical Gregory. For it has always been tempting to read "back" from the vantage point of a rich and secure Benedictine cloister of 1100 into Gregory's situation at the end of the 6th century, a turning point in history. In his many works on Pope Gregory, Robert Markus argued forcefully against such a skewed view of him.[13] Suffice it to say that we are potentially still too prone to read Gregory's works and view his place in our narratives through what we know of later history as perceived from a certain angle. We still need to bring Gregory's output into dialogue with texts, in Latin, Greek, Syriac, and Arabic, from his own age and from across the Mediterranean world whose horizons, as far afield as Arabia, Gregory clearly scanned. For in this age of Justinian and Muhammad, Gregory still seems more of an outsider than he really should have been.[14] Any view of Gregory as a medieval churchman ahead of his time must be resisted, in spite of his construction in this way by reformers and humanists of later centuries.

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[10] There is a particularly good discussion of this in Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great. Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 8–12.

[11] Moorhead, *Gregory the Great*, p. 26.

[12] Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand*, p. 14.

[13] The *locus classicus* is Robert Markus, "Gregory the Great's Europe," in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 31 (London, 1981), pp. 21–36.

[14] For a survey of this world, see Peter Sarris, *Empires of Faith: The Fall of Rome to the Rise of Islam, 500–700* (Oxford, 2011). For a recent attempt to position one aspect of Gregory's thoughts and activities in this age, see Matthew Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2012).

Finally, recent scholarly assessments of Gregory's intellectual "greatness" have frequently turned on the vexed question of Gregory's knowledge of Greek. While the case certainly can be made, it seems difficult to conclude that Gregory knew no Greek at all: the picture that emerges from his correspondence is of a man with an extensive network of friendships and acquaintances with Greek speakers that cannot have passed through the mediation of interpreters and translators exclusively. Similarly, while it is difficult to identify Greek works not already translated into Latin that Gregory may have known, he is the first western author to acknowledge the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and his thought seems heavily imbued with the ascetic wisdom of the eastern tradition.[15] The horizons of Gregory's thought world, at least, were clearly not limited by what was known only in Latin. On the contrary, his was a practical age and it can readily be imagined that Gregory could communicate a point in contemporary ecclesiastical Greek without necessarily possessing the ability to approach, let alone compose in, the classical language with ease[16]—and given the early training that many eastern churchmen had in Roman law, we might suppose that many of Gregory's Greek-speaking friends could do the same in simple, but serviceable, Latin.

Overview of the Contents

Our first five chapters place Gregory's life and achievements in their historical contexts, precariously situated as he was between the Roman empire of the East and a new, 'barbarian', West. In the first chapter, Bronwen Neil demonstrates that Gregory's attempt to manage the Roman church in the style of a Byzantine patriarch, while also maintaining a degree of spiritual and practical autonomy, made his papacy unique in both Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Cristina Ricci examines the rationale behind the various Roman missions to churches in England, Spain, and the Frankish and Lombard territories in Gregory's time, and questions the different motivations for each of these missions. Matthew Dal Santo shows how Gregory's profound but otherwise abstract commitment to the notion of Christian empire was firmly grounded in the networks he developed during his apocrisiariate in Constantinople. Gregory's promulgation of a

[15] Straw, *Gregory the Great*, p. 15; Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums: von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft*, 2 vols (Tübingen, 1930–33), 2: 399.

[16] Cf. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World*, p. 36.

distinctive type of monasticism is the subject of Barbara Müller's chapter, in which she examines the degree to which his monastic inclinations shaped his administration of the see of Rome. Philip Booth considers Gregory's position in relation to the patriarchs of the East, especially Anastasius of Antioch and Eulogius of Alexandria, and illuminates Gregory's connections with a tight-knit group of eastern monks that included John Moschus and Sophronius of Jerusalem, with implications for the future monothelete controversy in the mid-to-late 7th century.

In Section 2, we turn to Gregory's theological vision and his place within the patristic tradition. In Chapter 6, Bernard Green looks at Gregory's salvation theology and its sources, finding strong links with the soteriology of Cyril of Alexandria in his stress on the single subject of Christ. Influences from Augustine's and Leo the Great's understandings of Christ as God incarnate are also identified. Jane Baun's contribution uncovers new aspects of Gregorian eschatology, stressing the strong apocalyptic expectations that characterized his age. She shows that the Last Things were never far from his mind, both in respect to individual judgement after death, and the universal Last Judgement which would follow the Second Coming, and foreshadow the consummation of all things. Carole Straw examines Gregory's moral theology in terms of the vexed relationship between divine justice and human responsibility, the struggle to come to terms with which she locates firmly in the perils and challenges of his pontificate. Studies of two of Gregory's most influential works follow. George Demacopoulos considers Gregory's contribution to the practice of pastoral care, and interprets the *Regula Pastoralis* as a training manual aimed primarily at clerics with monastic backgrounds, and at providing them with a workable model for balancing the very different requirements of both active and contemplative lives. Stephen Lake places the important and well known text of the *Dialogues* within the wider context of Italian hagiography of the period. He outlines the rationale behind Gregory's choice of subjects in each of the four books of the *Dialogues*, with particular focus on the *Life of Benedict* in Book 2.

Section 3 deals with literary aspects of Gregory's works. The carefully hidden evidence of Gregory's classical learning and his knowledge of Greek language and literature is traced and evaluated by John Moorhead. Scott DeGregorio studies Gregory's exegetical methods in works as diverse as the *Moralia in Iob* and the *Dialogues*, considering which of his ways of approaching the scriptural text were traditional and which were innovative. Richard Pollard sketches the changes in style and Latinity in the papal *scrinium* that took place under Gregory and successors, shining a

light on some of the hidden talents that helped make Gregory's papacy so effective.

The reception of Gregory's theological *oeuvre* is the subject of Section 4. Although he was arguably under-appreciated in his own time, Gregory was to become one of the greatest saints of the western church, with an influence comparable to that of Augustine. Each of the chapters in Section 4 concentrates upon a different facet of Gregory's theology, refracted through the specific circumstances of the end of the 6th century, and polished with lapidary skill by future generations of Christians. His *Nachleben* is evident in the numerous translations of his works produced in medieval German, French, Dutch, Norse-Icelandic, and English. Gregory's reception in the Latin West is the subject of Constant Mews and Claire Renkin's chapter, a study of the literary and visual evidence for his cult. Mews and Renkin divide the construction of Gregory's reputation into four stages: prior to 780; from 780–1100; in the age of monastic reform and early scholasticism; and in the mendicant culture of 1200–1500. Gregory had a substantial impact on the eastern churches as well through translations of his works, and particularly in the *florilegium* of Evergetinus, although this is much more difficult to trace, as Andrew Louth demonstrates. In our final chapter, Ann Kuzdale examines Gregory's continuing influence on the West in the Renaissance and Reformation, and the use that was made of him in the sectarian debates of the early modern period. Kuzdale provides in an appendix a list of all incunabula and early printed Latin books of Gregory the Great (*c.*1460–1619).

It is part of the purpose of this volume to introduce a new generation of historians, theologians, and classicists to one of the most voluminous authors of Latin antiquity whose works have come down to us. Nevertheless, Gregory's writings hide far more than they reveal of the true character of their author; perhaps they were even designed to do so. The "real Gregory" will always offer much material for academic debate: haughty aristocrat/humble monk, Italian patriot/loyal servant of the emperor, doyen of classical Latin/hostile guerrilla in the church's campaign to bury "pagan" culture, visionary evangelist of England/powerless observer of a corrupt Gallic church. We hope that this volume will be both broad enough to serve the reader with an informed general interest in church history or Late Antiquity, while also having something to offer the specialist on Gregory's theology and his many influential works, if only to point the way to new scholarship on the subject.

We wish to express our gratitude to the dedicated team at Brill. The editors would like to thank *Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition*

series editor Christopher Bellitto and the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions for improvement of the volume. Thanks also to Sandra Sewell for her careful proofreading; to Marianne Ehrhardt, who translated Barbara Müller's chapter from German, and Stefano Girola, who translated Cristina Ricci's chapter from Italian. Finally, we are delighted to dedicate this volume to the memory of Robert Markus, who has done more than any other modern scholar to bring Gregory the Great out of the shadows of history. The author of many works that bridged the traditional scholarly divide between the later Roman Empire and the early Middle Ages, Robert Markus was a kindly colleague and mentor to many, and a source of inspiration to every contributor to this volume, one of whom, Bernard Green, has now passed away. We remember them both with gratitude and deep respect.

12 March, 2012
Feast of St Gregory the Great

PART 1

THE LIFE AND CONTEXT OF GREGORY I

CHAPTER ONE

THE PAPACY IN THE AGE OF GREGORY THE GREAT

Bronwen Neil

Gregory the Great's *Homilies on Ezekiel* contain a long and well-known list of disasters that offered incontrovertible proof to him that the world's end was at hand:[1]

> [C]ities have been destroyed, forts overturned, fields deserted, the earth emptied in solitude.... For since the Senate has failed, the people have perished, and the sufferings and groans of the few who remain are multiplied each day. Rome, now empty, is burning!

This utterance, perhaps more than any other, has characterized the modern view of Gregory as a doomsayer, an apocalyptical opportunist, who always kept an eye on the next world. This image of him has overshadowed his more pragmatic and business-like concern for the things of this world, especially in his governance of the Church. From a study of his letters in particular, Gregory emerges as a competent civic leader in the Byzantine mode of patriarch, whose breadth of activities in the temporal sphere was not based on a new, "medieval" conception of the papacy as a secular monarchy, but rather was a response to the unique exigencies of his times. In this respect he is the continuator of a 150-year old tradition of bishops of Rome as civic leaders, in the line of Leo the Great (440–61), Gelasius (492–96), and Pelagius I (556–61), and not, as he is often dubbed, "the first medieval pope".[2]

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[1] *HEz.* 2.6.22 (CCSL 142:310–12): "Destructae urbes, euersa sunt castra, depopulati agri, in solitudine terra redacta est.... Quia enim senatus deest, populus interiit, et tamen in paucis qui sunt dolores et gemitus cotidie multiplicantur, iam uacua ardet Roma." Cf. *HEz.* 1.9.9; *Reg.* 5.37 to Emperor Maurice (June 595); *Dial.* 2.15.3; *HEv.* 17.17 and 28.3. Translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

[2] E.g. *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Post-Classical World,* ed. Glen W. Bowersock, Peter R.L. Brown, and Oleg Grabar (Harvard, 1999) s.v. "Gregory the Great," p. 478; F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (London—New York, 2002), p. 47, on candidates for the greatest pope of the Middle Ages: "at the head of any such list should be the name of Pope Gregory the Great"; Joan Barclay-Lloyd, "Sixth-century Art and Architecture in 'Old Rome': End or Beginning?" in *The Sixth Century. End or Beginning?* eds Pauline Allen and Elizabeth M. Jeffreys, Byzantina Australiensia 10 (Brisbane, 1996), pp. 224–35, at

Leaving the sequestered life in the monastery of St Andrew's that he founded as a young man in his family home on the Caelian Hill, Gregory took up the burdens of the leadership of the Roman Church in September 590 with some reluctance. While still a deacon, Gregory had been employed for about six years as papal *apocrisiarius* for Pelagius II in the imperial capital, a formative experience with implications for a continued intellectual exchange between Rome and Constantinople during his pontificate. The many letters Gregory sent to the Byzantine imperial family, other bishops, and significant lay persons during his pontificate, reflect his talents as an administrator, petitioner and negotiator. The reception of so many of Gregory's letters into medieval canon law is testimony to his spiritual authority, particularly in the West, but also in the eastern churches. The extent and success of his activities in the areas of pastoral care and crisis management must also be counted in any assessment of Gregory's contribution as bishop of Rome.

Two major *foci* can be identified in Gregory's activities as bishop of Rome: the spiritual leadership of the Church of Italy and the wider Church; and the administration both of the dioceses of Italy and the wider Church. It is appropriate to treat his roles as spiritual leader and administrator together because, as Adam Serfass has clearly demonstrated in relation to the issue of slavery, Gregory's administrative responses were always informed by pastoral considerations. His first concern was the preservation of the social order in order to facilitate the salvation of souls.[3] The tension between the twin demands of pastoral care and administration plagued Gregory, who maintained that he felt torn between the demands of the job and his personal desire to devote himself to his monastic vocation.[4] This tension was typical of bishops in Late Antiquity, when they were called upon to shoulder more burdens for civic administration than previously, due to the breakdown of municipal government, the demise of the Roman senate and, from 476 until 536, the lack of an imperial pres-

235: "By [Gregory's] time, through the trials of the sixth century, Rome had seen the world of antiquity come to an end. A new era, the Middle Ages, was beginning."

[3] Adam Serfass, "Slavery and Pope Gregory the Great", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14.1 (2006), 77–103, at 78 and 102.

[4] *Mor., pref.* (ed. MGH Epp. 1, *Ep.* 5.53a.1). See also *Reg.* 1.7 and 1.24 on the burdens of pastoral care. See Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 9–11.

ence in the Western Empire.[5] Gregory's struggle to resolve this tension is a major theme of early hagiographers of his life and works.

Starting with an analysis of the earliest sources on Gregory's life—the contemporary entry in the *LP*, and the earliest *Life of Gregory* from Whitby—we will gain a picture of how Gregory's contemporaries evaluated his leadership. I then survey the institutional structures of the papacy in the 6th to 8th centuries, looking for any innovations made by Gregory. Then, using the papal letter collections of Leo I, Gelasius, and Pelagius I as a background, I examine what Gregory's letters tell us about his spiritual leadership and administration of the dioceses subject to Rome. Finally I examine Gregory's relationship to the wider Church, and close with an assessment of Gregory's style of leadership against existing Byzantine and Roman models.

Early Representations of Gregory's Life and Works

Let us start with an analysis of the earliest sources on Gregory's life—the contemporary entry in the *LP*, and the earliest *Life of Gregory* from Whitby—in order to gain a picture of how Gregory's contemporaries evaluated his leadership. *LP*, a record of the bishops of Rome and their achievements in the style of imperial *res gestae*, is concerned to name the place of birth, the father of each of its bishops, and the father's occupation, and Gregory is no exception. Gregory, the son of Gordian, was born in Rome,[6] *c.*540. By his era, the range of social backgrounds of successful candidates had narrowed considerably. In 5th-century Rome, popes were raised from a range of geographic and social backgrounds. Outsiders, or non-Romans, included Pope Innocent I from the city of Albanum, just outside Rome; Zosimus, a Greek; two Sardinians, Hilary, and Symmachus; and from the Italian provinces Celestine, a Campanian; Leo I, a Tuscan; and Simplicius, a Tiburian. In 483 AD, Gregory's great-great-grandfather Felix III was the first bishop to be appointed from the Roman aristocracy, the candidate of Basilius, head of the senatorial order.[7] Up to this point, members of the Roman senate had shown no interest in interfering in

[5] For other examples of such bishops, see Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass. 2004).

[6] *LP* 1:312.

[7] Jeffrey Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476–752* (London—New York, 1979), p. 235. Gregory refers to Felix as his *atavus* in *Dial.* 4.17.

episcopal elections. In the following century, only the first three out of fourteen bishops originated from the provinces.[8] All the rest were born in Rome, and six—Boniface II, Agapitus, Vigilius, Pelagius I, John III, and Gregory I—were from the Roman aristocracy.[9]

It may surprise the modern reader to learn that the *LP* had very little to say about Gregory's pontificate. The entry is of no more than average length, and its tone strikingly neutral. While some of his major works are listed (*Homiliae in Evangelia, Moralia in Iob, Homiliae in Hiezechielem, Regula pastoralis*, and *Dialogi*), the letters go unmentioned.[10] His defeat of the Lombard threat in northern Italy was attributed to the exarch of Ravenna, Romanus, who took back various cities from Lombard control between Rome and Ravenna. Gregory's mission to the English is mentioned without special praise. An equally important contribution, according to this source, was his addition of a few phrases to the recital of the Canon of the Mass. He gave donations of purple cloth, gold, and silver to the shrines of Rome's saintly protectors, Peter and Paul, and a silver four-columned canopy (*ciborium*) and altar over each of their tombs so that Mass could be celebrated there.[11] He reconciled an Arian church in the Subura, St Agatha of the Goths, and established his own house on the Caelian Hill as a monastery.[12] He performed ordinations of thirty-nine priests and five deacons in Rome; he ordained some sixty-two bishops for "various places".[13] Apart from the notice of his death and burial in St Peter's, following the custom of the four preceding popes,[14] this is the sum total of information given about Gregory's almost fourteen year pontificate. Only his many written works serve to distinguish this bishop's *res gestae* from any of his predecessors'.

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[8] Popes Hormisdas from Frusino, Campania; his son Silverius; John I from Tuscany; and Felix IV from Samnium.

[9] See Richards, *Popes and the Papacy*, pp. 240–42; on Gregory I's background, see *Enciclopedia dei papi* 1 (Rome, 2000), pp. 546–74, and John Moorhead, "On Becoming Pope in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Religious History* 30.3 (2006), pp. 279–93.

[10] *LP* 1:312.

[11] Barclay-Lloyd, "Sixth-Century Art and Architecture," p. 234.

[12] His biographer John the Deacon described the monastery buildings as including an atrium, cells for monks, stables, a cellar, and chapels for Sts. Barbara and Mary: *Vita Gregorii Magni* (PL 75:65 and 229–34).

[13] This was not an excessive number when compared with the numbers of bishops ordained by his predecessors Pelagius I (49); John III (61); Benedict (21); and Pelagius II (48).

[14] Pelagius I, John III, Benedict I, and Pelagius II.

By contrast, the earliest *Vita* of Gregory, composed *c.*713 by a monk of Whitby, presages the magnitude of Gregory's future reputation in the Middle Ages.[15] The *Life* presents a very sympathetic picture of Gregory, celebrating the pope as the founder of the English Church. The *Life* originated within Gregory's own circle and its account was spread far and wide across the Mediterranean world.[16] Its sympathetic portrayal did not extend to Gregory's successor Sabinian, however. The Whitby monk gives "a very unpleasant account"[17] of Gregory's appearance in a dream to his successor to reproach him for his jealousy and greed. Sabinian remained obdurate and unrepentant, so Gregory kicked him in the head, causing his death. The Whitby source relays some information—such as the name of Gregory's mother, Silvia—independently of Bede, the *LP* or the brief *Vita Gregorii Magni* by Paul the Deacon, composed between 770 and 780, and supplemented by Paul's *Historia Langobardorum.*[18] The late 9th-century *Vita* by John the Deacon provides a little more information.[19]

Gregory's entry in the *LP* may be compared with the entry in Ravenna's *Liber Pontificalis* for Marinian (595–606), the bishop of Ravenna whose rule was almost contiguous with that of Gregory I.[20] Marinian was a Roman-born monk who had lived in Gregory's monastery of St Andrew's. Gregory rejected two other candidates whom the people of Ravenna had proposed when the see became vacant in 595, and put forward Marinian.

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[15] *Liber beati et laudabili viri Gregorii papae urbis Romae de vita atque virtutibus*, ed. Bertram Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby* (Cambridge, 1968). Bede used this early Latin life as a source for *HE* 2, ch. 1 (eds and trans Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford Medieval Texts [Oxford, 1969], pp. 122–34). See Peter Llewellyn, "The Roman Church in the Seventh Century: the Legacy of Gregory the Great," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 25 (1974), 363–80.

[16] A. Thacker, "Memorializing Gregory the Great: the Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), 59–84.

[17] Bertram Colgrave, "The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great, written by a Whitby Monk," in *Celt and Saxon: Studies in the Early British Border*, ed. Nora Chadwick (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 119–37, at 126.

[18] MGH SSRL, pp. 45–187.

[19] PL 75:61–242. John's preface notes that Pope John VIII (872–82) requested a *Life* of Gregory, since the Roman Church had none while the English and Lombards both had one: PL 75:61. Gregory of Tours gave a contemporary account of Gregory's election in *HF* 10.1; ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SSRM 1,1,2, pp. 477–81. For the sake of completeness we should also mention two 7th-century Spanish sources, Isidore of Seville's *De viris illustribus* 40 and Ildefonsus of Toledo's *De virorum illustrium scriptis* 1, the latter chapter being a later edition to Ildefonsus' work: Jacques Fontaine, "Chronique de littérature wisigothique (1970–1972)," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 19 (1973), 163–76, at 171.

[20] *LPR* 99–100 (ed. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, CCCM 199 [Turnhout, 2006], pp. 268–69).

Gregory and Marinian shared an extensive correspondence between 595 and 603.[21] According to Gregory's biographers, the *Regula pastoralis* was dedicated to Marinian's predecessor John II. However, Agnellus claims that it was written expressly for Marinian who, like Gregory, had been reluctant to take up the episcopal office.[22] This 9th-century text sums up the different challenges of temporal and episcopal leadership thus:[23]

> If you want to consider, a bishop is greater than a king... [T]he king [thinks] that he might lead rebels captive, the bishop that he might purchase, redeem, and release captives; the one, that he might pass a quiet night in sleep, the other that he might last the whole night in divine prayers. And what more? Just that the king asks the bishop to pray to God for him.

Institutional Structures of the 6th-Century Papacy

The *Liber Pontificalis* of Ravenna is also a valuable comparative source on the institutional structures of the papacy in the 6th century. Our sources unfortunately do not preserve a clear picture of the practical day-to-day workings of the papal court during Gregory's pontificate. Rome was technically a duchy under the imperial exarch of Italy, based in Ravenna.[24] However, it was the Church of Rome that administered the city in the late 500s. In a letter of instruction preserved only in the *Liber Pontificalis* of Ravenna, Pope Felix IV (526–30) gave a direction to Bishop Ecclesius (522–32) of the Church of Ravenna to keep a registry of documents so that it would be possible to produce both letters sent and received in any given case:[25]

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[21] *Reg.* 5.61; 6.1; 6.2; 6.24; 6.28; 7.39; 7.40; 8.16; 8.17; 8.18; 8.20; 9.118; 9.132; 9.139; 9.149; 9.156; 9.178; 9.189; 11.21; 13.28; 14.6. Cited by Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (trans.), *The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna* (Washington DC, 2004), p. 215, n. 1.

[22] *LPR* 99 (CCCM 199:268). Deliyannis (*Book of Pontiffs*, p. 215 n. 2) suggests that Agnellus must have seen a personal dedication to Marinian in a copy of the *RP*. Marinian was also the dedicatee of Gregory's *Homilies on Ezekiel*.

[23] *LPR* 100, trans. Deliyannis, pp. 216–17 (CCCM 199:269): "Si considerare uultis episcopus plus est quam rex.... [R]ex ut captiuos ducat rebelles, episcopus ut emat captiuos, redimat et absoluat; iste ut quieta nocte somnum ducat, ille nocte tota in laudibus persistat diuinis. Et quid plura? Etiam et ipse rex episcopum, ut pro eo Deum deprecetur, rogat."

[24] Peter Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages*, 2nd ed. (London, 1993), p. 141.

[25] *Constitutum de ecclesia Ravennatensi* (CPL 1687), conserved in *LPR* 60, trans. Deliyannis, p. 175 (CCCM 199:229): "Notarii uero iuxta ordinem matriculae, primicerii, secundicerii, tercius, quartus, quintus, sextus et septimus, suo periculo in conspectu presbiterum et diaconorum documenta ecclesiastica sub fidelium breuium descriptione suscipiant." Deliyannis has translated *suo periculo* "in their legal register".

> Let the notaries in order of office, *primicerius, secundicerius*, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh maintain the ecclesiastical documents in their legal register in the sight of the priests and deacons according to a list of precise inventories...

This text has been taken to indicate that the Roman Church had seven notaries of the kind Felix suggests.[26] However, there is no indication that, even in the time of Gregory I, the papal administration included the number of notaries who appeared later. Felix's letter is signed by clerics of the Church of Ravenna, who were part of Bishop Ecclesius' retinue in his visit to Rome. The signatories included the *defensor*, notary *defensor*, senior *defensor*, and superintendent of stores (*horrearius*),[27] a clear indication that these four offices at least existed in the early 6th-century Ravennan Church.

By the 8th century, the Roman curia's primary institutional units were the seven *iudices de clero*, whose offices were modeled on imperial dignitaries.[28] The retinue of the Syrian Pope Constantine (708–15) included: 1. *primicerius notariorum*, or chief secretary, who supervised the notaries and the papal library and archives in the 7th century;[29] 2. *secundicarius*, his deputy; 3. *primicerius defensorum*, head of the *defensores*, who defended the legal rights of the poor and oppressed, and later the rights of the Church in general (one of Gregory's first acts was to appoint his friend Peter the subdeacon as *defensor* of Sicily in 590);[30] 4. *sacellarius*

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[26] Cf. Deliyannis, *Book of Pontiffs*, p. 175 n. 9, where she surmises: "This organization seems to imitate the administration of the Roman Church, which contained seven regional notaries." She cites Thomas F.X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State from 680–825* (Philadelphia, 1984), p. 219.

[27] *LPR* 60, trans. Deliyannis, pp. 176–77 (CCCM 199:230–31).

[28] Cf. Llewellyn's reconstruction in *Rome in the Dark Ages*, pp. 114–22, where he attributes to Gregory the extension of the collegiate system of Roman administration to two new colleges, one of lay regional notaries and the other of *defensores ecclesiae*, both of which were headed by a *primicerius* and his deputy, the *secundicerius*.

[29] The *primicerius notariorum* is first mentioned in *LP* Julius (337–52), as the officer responsible for Church documents including bonds, deed, donations, exchanges, transfers, wills, declarations and manumissions (*LP* 1:205). In *LP* Constantine, he is called the *scriniarius* (*LP* 1:389).

[30] *Reg.* 1.1 to the bishops of Sicily, dated September 590 (CCSL 140:1): "Nec enim de eius actibus dubitare possumus cui, Deo auxiliante, totum nostrae ecclesiae noscimur patrimonium commisisse." "Nor can we doubt as to the conduct of [Peter] to whom, with the help of God, we are known to have committed the charge of the whole patrimony of our Church." Men posing as *defensores* of the apostolic see in Sicily in order to defraud bishops are mentioned in *Reg.* 1.68 and *Reg.* 9.22. A full list of defenders in Gregory's letters is given in John R.C. Martyn, "Six Notes on Gregory the Great," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s. 29 (2003), 1–25, at 1–7. Martyn is incorrect in his suggestion that the *defensor ecclesiae*, modelled on the secular *defensor plebis*, may have been an invention of Gregory's (John R.C.

or paymaster; 5. *nomenclator*, possibly the master of ceremonies at the papal court, who was assisted by an *ordinator*;[31] 6. *arcarius* or treasurer, who looked after financial matters;[32] and finally 7. *vicedominus*, the chief steward of the papal residence (*episcopium*), and perhaps the head of the chamberlains (*cubicularii*).[33] A *vicedominus* appeared as early as Vigilius' pontificate (537–55), when the priest Ampliatus was sent back to Rome to look after the Church "as his *vicedominus*" while the pope was away in Constantinople.[34] The late-7th century *Ordo Romanus* lists the *vicedominus* as one of four dignitaries to ride behind the pope's horse.[35] The other three were the *vestiarius*, who was in charge of much of the Church's wealth, the *nomenclator* and *sacellarius*. The papal librarian (*bibliothecarius*) was not numbered among the *iudices de clero* in the 8th century,[36] but seems to have developed into a separate office, distinct from the *primicerius notariorum*, by this time.[37] This is not an exhaustive list of offices in Gregory's day, and the offices listed were not mutually exclusive. For instance, Gregory's personal secretary (*chartularius*) was sent to manage the Sicilian patrimony in 603 (*Reg.* 13.20).

Seven suburbicarian bishops were appointed by the pope to the major sees in the vicinity of the city of Rome, and were assigned special privileges: for example, from the 4th century the bishop of Ostia was usually the one chosen to consecrate the bishop of Rome. Two clerical offices in this period were crucial for elevation to the papacy: prior experience as an *apocrisiarius* in Constantinople, and appointment to the office of deacon.[38]

Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, Mediaeval Sources in Translation, 3 vols [Toronto, 2004] 1:92). There are many instances of the former in the 5th century, e.g. in the letters of Augustine of Hippo and Pope Gelasius.

[31] Raymond Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs* (*Liber Pontificalis*). *The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, 2nd ed. Translated Texts for Historians 6 (Liverpool, 2000) Glossary, p. 132.

[32] The *arcarius* appears in the pontificate of Agatho (678–81), according to Davis (*Book of Pontiffs*, Glossary, s.v. "Arcarius", p. 117), but the chapter in question (Ch. 17) is missing from his translated text of the entry for Agatho (Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, p. 79).

[33] *LP* 1:389–90.

[34] *LP* 1:297.

[35] *Ordo Romanus* 1 (ed. Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Âge*: Tome 2: *Les Textes* (*Ordines 1–13*) [Leuven, 1971], p. 70). Cf. Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, Glossary, p. 141, s.v. "Vicedominus".

[36] See further Noble, *Republic*, pp. 221–24 on the *iudices de clero* in a later period.

[37] Henri Leclerq, "Rome: Bibliothèque et archives pontificales," *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* 14.2:3107 n. 1.

[38] Moorhead, "On Becoming Pope," 28–92.

Gregory, as we know, held both offices, as did his immediate successors Sabinian and Boniface III.[39]

There was no regular diplomatic institution during the early medieval period, and *apocrisiarii* to the imperial capital from the 5th century to the 730s were little more than messengers, without plenipotentiary powers.[40] The notaries of the papal *scrinium*, or archive, were among the pope's closest advisors and were often used as envoys, due to the knowledge they had gained in the course of producing papal documents,[41] particularly letters on sensitive subjects. To speak of "implementing policies" in the modern sense is to attribute too rigid an organizational structure to decision-making processes within the curia. However, thanks to his stint as *apocrisiarius* in Constantinople, Gregory made lasting connections with other *apocrisiarii*, especially Anastasius of Antioch, with whom he was to correspond frequently during his pontificate.[42] Anastasius also translated Gregory's *Regula pastoralis* into Greek.[43] Gregory's knowledge of Greek has been the subject of much debate, but most scholars now concur that he knew at least enough to function as an emissary to the Greek-speaking capital.[44]

Gregory speaks often in his letters of *actores* or agents whom he entrusted with the task of procuring slaves for his estates or patrimonies.[45] Papal properties, stretching from Sicily through Calabria to Bruttium, Lucania, and the Cottian Alps, were managed by a *rector*.[46] The Roman

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[39] *Reg.* 5.6 and 14.8.

[40] Noble, *Republic*, p. 239.

[41] Noble, *Republic*, p. 219, referring to the period he called the "Republic of St. Peter", from 680 to 825. Peter Llewellyn rightly added the caveat that the term "republic" carries notions of sovereignty which cannot justly be attributed to the papacy before the 13th century: Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages*, p. 321 n. 10.

[42] E.g. *Reg.* 1.7; 1.24, Gregory's synodical letter to the four patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, as well as the ex-patriarch Anastasius; *Reg.* 1.25 (CCSL 140:34.36), in which Gregory offers consolation to Anastasius in his exile, and sends him as a gift the keys of St. Peter "which are accustomed to shine with many miracles when placed over the sick." "... quae super aegros positae multis solent miraculis coruscare." See also *Reg.* 5.41; 5.42; 7.24; 7.31; and 8.2.

[43] *Reg.* 12.6 (CCSL 140A:976.56).

[44] Gregory confesses his own ignorance of Greek in *Reg.*7.29 (CCSL 140A:487.6–7) to Anastasius of Jerusalem: "Et quamuis in multis occupatus, quamuis Graecae linguae nescius...". See Lellia Cracco Ruggini, "Greco," *Enciclopedia Gregoriana. La vita, l'opera e la fortuna di Gregorio Magno*, eds Giuseppe Cremascoli and Antonella Degl'Innocenti (Florence, 2008), pp. 161–62. See the discussion of Gregory's knowledge of Greek in the Editors' Preface *supra*.

[45] E.g. *Reg.* 1.53; 4.43; 9.124.

[46] E.g. the rectors of Palermo and Syracuse, who managed Sicilian estates from 593: *Reg.* 2.50; 3.27; 9.23; 13.20. See Robert A. Markus, "Gregory the Great's *rector* and his Genesis,"

Church was required to pay various taxes to Constantinople, including poll-taxes on persons and livestock held on its patrimonies.[47]

Earlier Papal Letters and Letter Collections

An evaluation of Gregory's uniqueness must be framed against the contributions of previous late-antique bishops of Rome. The best source for these is the corpus of papal letters, the main vehicle of communication between bishops, their clerical colleagues and subjects, and their imperial masters in Late Antiquity. A brief survey of the major collections of papal correspondence in the 5th and 6th centuries will establish whether Gregory's pontificate exemplifies the continuity of an existing tradition of administrative and pastoral letter-writing in the papacy, or something new and innovative. Two of the largest Latin corpora of episcopal letters before Gregory's were produced by Leo the Great (440–61) and Gelasius (492–96). The third largest was that of Pelagius I (556–61).

Leo the Great

The great bulk of Leo's 143 letters concern matters of clerical discipline, ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the Eutychian controversy. Along with seventeen decretals by Leo on Church discipline, the decretals of Popes Siricius, Innocent, Zosimus, Boniface, Celestine, and Sixtus III were preserved in early canon law collections. Leo's addressees number among the most influential figures of the age: the eastern emperors Marcian and Theodosius II, Theodosius' sister and Marcian's wife Pulcheria, and Galla Placidia, mother of the western emperor Valentinian III; the archimandrite Eutyches; Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople, as well as many other bishops of note. The letters, however, contain very few indications of papal concern for the needy or the lowly. On matters of social history—famine, plague, the flight of refugees, relief of poverty, etc.—there is precious little to find in any letters of early 5th-century bishops, an interesting fact in itself. Such indications as there are of Leo's involvement with providing

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in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine, Robert Gillet, and Stan Pellistrandi, Chantilly, Centre culturel, Les Fontaines, 15–19 Septembre 1982 (Paris, 1986), pp. 137–46.

[47] John V (*LP* 1:36), while still a deacon under Pope Agatho, brought imperial mandates back from the 6th Ecumenical Synod of Constantinople (680/81), which abolished various taxes, including the *annonocapita* (poll-taxes), for the patrimonies of Sicily and Calabria. See Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, Glossary, p. 116, s.v. "Annonocapita".

for the poor, ransoming captives, rebuilding and refurnishing churches destroyed in barbarian sieges, and undertaking diplomatic missions—for example, to Attila in 452—occur in his ninety-seven homilies and in other authors' accounts of his pontificate, especially Prosper Tiro's *Epitome Chronicon*.[48] Leo's sole reference to slavery is found in a letter to Italian bishops prohibiting the ordination of slaves and *coloni*, as well as clerical and lay usury.[49] The other decretals deal with matters of marriage, penance, baptism, ordination, ecclesiastical hierarchy, ownership and sale of church property, and the proper punishment of heresy.[50] Three heretical groups were targeted apart from the Eutychians and followers of Nestorius: Pelagians, Priscillianists, and Manichees.[51]

The first letter of recommendation in the 5th-century Roman corpus on behalf of any individual, other than clergy involved in religious controversies or disciplinary enquiries, is written by Felix III (483–92) to Emperor Zeno, dated 483.[52] In it, the bishop recommends Terrentianus, a *vir clarissimus* who had come to Italy a short while before, requesting that he might carry letters of Felix to Zeno, which request Felix approved.

Gelasius I

The letters of Gelasius (sixty-one letters and forty-nine fragments) indicate a definite shift in focus of papal activity, with more evidence of interventions on behalf of individuals and financial management. This may

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[48] Prosper Tiro, *Epitome chronicon edita primum a. CCCXXXIII continuata ad a. CCCCLV*, 1367 (ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA Chron. min. 9 [Berlin, 1892], p. 482).

[49] Leo, *Ep.* 4.1 and 4.3 to the bishops of Catania, Etruria, Picenum and all the provinces (ed. Hubertus Wurm, "Epistula decretalis S. Leonis magni Romani pontificis," *Apollinaris* 12 [1939], 79–93). While the prohibition of usury for clergy was quite normal, Leo's extension of it to the laity was not. See Pauline Allen, Bronwen Neil, and Wendy Mayer, *Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Realities*, Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 28 (Leipzig, 2009), pp. 198–200.

[50] Bronwen Neil (intro. and trans.), *Leo the Great*, The Early Church Fathers (London—New York, 2009), pp. 46–49.

[51] Leo I, *Epp.* 1 and 2 (Pelagian clergy in northern Italy); *Ep.* 7 (Manichees in Italy); *Ep.* 15 (Prisicillianists in Gallicia, Spain). For discussion of these letters, see Bronwen Neil, "A Crisis of Orthodoxy: Leo I's Fight Against the 'Deadly Disease' of Heresy," in *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts as Crisis Management Literature. Thematic Studies from the Centre for Early Christian Studies*, eds David Sim and Pauline Allen (London, 2012), pp. 144–58.

[52] Felix III, *Ep.* 5 (ed. Andreas Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a s. Hilaro usque ad Pelagium II*, Fasciculus I [1867; repr. Hildesheim, 2004], p. 242). *LP* (1:252), tells us that he was born in Rome, son of the cleric Felix, priest of the *titulus* of Fasciola.

be due to the fact that Gelasius was of African origin.[53] Gelasius penned letters for his predecessor Felix III (e.g. *Ep.* 14), and we find letters written in Gelasius' name even before he became bishop (*Ep.* 1, *Tract.* 1).

Most of Gelasius' surviving letters concern the Acacian schism, continuing his predecessor's excommunication of Acacius and his followers. He also took up the pen against the resurgence of Pelagianism in Dalmatia (*Epp.* 4 and 5), and in a letter to the bishops of Picenum described it as "more dangerous" than the Gothic incursions against Rome's neighbouring provinces in the same year (*Ep.* 6). Religious controversy continued to prevail in importance over all other crises, even war.

However, the Gelasian corpus provides evidence of papal activity on behalf of many individuals, of varied social backgrounds. Five letters deal with cases of slaves or indentured labourers who have been illegitimately ordained to the clergy (*Epp.* 20–24). Gelasius intervenes with two Italian bishops on behalf of a nobleman, Amandianus, some of whose bondsmen have been ordained and are now priests or deacons (*Ep.* 20). Gelasius issues a decree about two slaves belonging to a noblewoman, Placidia, who had complained to the pope that her slaves were ordained when their mistress was absent. Two letters take up the case of two former slaves who claim to have been manumitted before they were ordained, but were now being reclaimed by their former master's heir, one Theodora (*Epp.* 23 and 24). The clerics had lodged a tearful complaint of violent oppression by their new mistress. Two brief letters, which Thiel calls creditor's receipts (*apochae*),[54] show Gelasius managing the Roman Church's financial affairs, much as we later see Gregory doing.

Very few letters in the 5th-century corpus pertain to the distribution of church funds to the poor. Simplicius established the fourfold distribution of funds known as the *quadraticum*, with a quarter being dedicated to the needs of the poor.[55] Gelasius directs the bishops of Sicily to distribute church funds to the needy in the following order: widows, orphans, paupers, and clerics; the remainder they may claim for them-

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[53] *LP* (1:255) claims that he was African; Gelasius confirms this in *Ep.* 12 (ed. Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum*, p. 350): "sicut Romanus natus Romanum principem amo"; "as one who is Roman-born, I love the Roman emperor". Thiel (*Epistolae Romanorum*, p. 350 n. 5) points out that Gelasius may have just been referring to his Roman citizenship. However, three manuscripts read: *Romae natus*, a phrase which points more explicitly to Roman birth.

[54] Gelasius, *Ep.* 31 and 32 (ed. Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum*, pp. 447–48).

[55] Gelasius, *Ep.* 1.2 (ed. Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum*, pp. 176–77).

selves, so that they can offer largesse to pilgrims (*peregrini*) and captives.[56] In this respect, we can see that a real change in papal leadership style was effected by the time of Gregory I, with his increased interest in the fates of various impoverished widows, disabled persons, runaway slaves, and others who sought refuge or material aid from the Roman Church.

The major letter collections of the early- to mid-6th century are those of Hormisdas (514–23) and Vigilius (537–55), which are narrowly concerned with the Acacian schism and the *Three Chapters* controversy respectively.[57] The brief pontificate of Agapitus (535–36), probably an ancestor of Gregory's, demonstrates more concern with clerical discipline in the seven letters which survive.[58] In two of them Agapitus addresses the continuing struggle against the Arian heresy in North Africa.[59] The most interesting is his letter to Caesarius of Arles, perhaps a response to Caesarius' request for funds to help the poor, where Agapitus rules that church property cannot be alienated to help another, but that he will furnish funds to Caesarius.[60] The library of Agapitus, which Gregory transferred to his new abode in the Lateran palace, may well have contained these seven letters.[61]

Pelagius I and Pelagius II

The correspondence of Pelagius I, consisting of ninety-six surviving letters from his five year pontificate, indicates that the shift to "micro-management" had taken place. Pelagius tried to combat famine in Rome by giving away the produce and revenues of papal estates (*Ep.* 4.9). This is one of very few references in the Roman epistolary record to the waves of plague and famine that wracked Italy from the 540s. Pelagius I also

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[56] Gelasius, *Ep.* 17.1 (ed. Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum*, pp. 381–82). See also Gelasius, *frag.* 20 (ed. Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum*, pp. 494–95).

[57] Hormisdas: 67 letters (ed. Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum*, pp. 741–990). Vigilius: 19 letters (PL 69:15–68).

[58] Moorhead, "On Becoming Pope," 281, argues that Agapitus was very probably another member of Gregory's family; Henri-Irénée Marrou, "Autour de la bibliothèque de Pape Agapit," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome* 48 (1931), 125–69, at 131, claimed the opposite. Gregory's and Agapitus' fathers shared the same name, Gordianus.

[59] Agapitus, *Ep.* 3 (ed. Otto Guenther, *Collectio Avellana*, CSEL 135:330–47); *Ep.* 4 (CSEL 135:347).

[60] *Ep.* 5 (PL 66:46).

[61] The transfer is witnessed by an inscription in the new library: Marrou, "Autour," 167; cf. E. Giuliani and C. Pavolini, "La 'Biblioteca di Agapito' e la Basilica di S. Agnese," in William V. Harris, *The Transformation of* Urbs Roma *in Late Antiquity*, *Journal of Roman Archeology Supplement* 33 (Portsmouth, RI, 1999), pp. 85–107, at 103–06.

appealed to the praetorian prefect of Africa, Boethius, complaining in a letter of 560 about the size of the refugee problem and the devastation of Italy in the Gothic wars.[62] In 556 he begged the bishop of Arles, Sapaudus, to send him supplies of clothing for the citizens of Rome: even the formerly wealthy had not enough to wear.[63]

The trend continued in Pelagius II's (579–90) six surviving letters, four of which are transmitted only in Gregory's *Registrum*.[64] In one, addressed to the future pope Gregory,[65] Pelagius II instructed his deacon and *apocrisiarius* Gregory to petition Emperor Maurice for military aid against the Lombard attacks in Italy. His appeal was sadly unsuccessful. In 590 Pelagius II died of the plague, a malign by-product of the floods that engulfed Italy in 589 to 591.

It seems then from a comparison of the 5th-century corpora with the 6th-century correspondence of Agapitus, Hormisdas, Pelagius I, and Pelagius II, that increasing use was made of letters by the papacy from the 6th century onwards as tools of patronage, as well as for exercising pastoral care. These letter collections indicate that Gregory's letter-writing on a variety of administrative and spiritual subjects was the continuation of a tradition begun by Leo I. The keeping of a papal register by Gregory's *scrinium* had gained a higher priority, but what survives—approximately one letter per week for nearly fourteen years—is probably only a fraction of his total epistolary output.

As in the preceding centuries, there are almost no letters to individuals resident in the city of Rome.[66] The letters of Gregory, who came from an old Roman family that had generated a previous bishop of Rome, demonstrate his fulfilment of all the normal duties of an elite patron, making many bequests of money, food, grain, and wine to the needy, many of whom were impoverished elites, their widows and children. His exercise of such duties will be discussed below, together with his spiritual leadership of his subjects, which was inextricably bound up with his more pastoral concerns for his subjects in Italy and in the wider Church.

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[62] Pelagius I, *Ep.* 85 (eds Pius M. Gassó and Columba M. Batlle, *Pelagii I Papae epistulae quae supersunt (556–561)*, Scripta et Documenta 8 [Montserrat, 1956]), pp. 207–08.

[63] Pelagius I, *Ep.* 4 (eds Gassó and Batlle), pp. 11–13.

[64] Three of Pelagius II's letters were addressed to Elias of Aquileia and the other bishops of Istria seeking unity on the *Three Chapters* question (eds Paul Ewald and Ludwig M. Hartmann, MGH Epp. 2, Appendix 3 [Berlin, 1899], pp. 442–67).

[65] Pelagius II, *Ep.* 2 (MGH Epp. 2, pp. 440–41). October 584.

[66] Jean Durliat, "Gregory I," *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philippe Levillain, trans. from French, vol. 2 (London—New York, 2002), pp. 639–42, at 640.

Spiritual Leader and Administrator of the Dioceses Subject to Rome

Gregory's challenges in leading the churches of Italy and Sicily included maintaining clerical discipline and imposing degrees of penance for infringements; making shrewd episcopal appointments, especially in Sicily; managing the papal patrimonies and their slave labour force; and managing crises such as famine, flood and plague, and the threat of war.

Clerical Discipline

Gregory was no stranger to problems among the clergy of his far-flung dioceses. In two sermons in his commentary on the Gospel of John, Gregory admonishes bishops for various crimes,[67] but, as Deliyannis notes, "Gregory is more concerned with the crime of remaining silent in the face of sin among the flock... than with outright financial corruption."[68] Gregory condemned the sale of clerical office (the "simoniac heresy") in sees outside Rome's authority in *Reg.* 5.16 (in eastern Illyricum), *Reg.* 5.58 (in Gaul), and *Reg.* 9.135, 11.28 and 13.44 (in the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem respectively).[69] The Roman Church was not alone in these vices. Agnellus' chapter on Gregory's counterpart in Ravenna, Marinian, gives a comprehensive list of similar clerical abuses, including simony, bribery, fraud, and unfair arbitration of cases:[70]

> [Marinian] was not like others, who devour the possessions of the Church for episcopal honor, who even take bribes of[f] another, and become debtors. And if a dispute arises between two persons, they so traffic in the dignity of their honor, as to sell out one of the parties. And they send spies between each other, to find out how much money the other wants to give.

Rome acted as a court of appeal for bishops and priests from Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople.[71] A bishop could only be deposed for

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[67] *Hev.* 14.2–3 (CCSL 141:97–99) seeking temporal rewards from clerical office; and 17.14 (CCSL 141:129) stealing property; seeking earthly glory.

[68] Deliyannis, CCCM 199, p. 40.

[69] Cf. *HEv.* 17.13 (CCSL 141:126–27).

[70] *LPR* 100, trans. Deliyannis, pp. 215–16 (CCCM 199:268): "Non fuit iste ut ceteri qui res ecclesiae deuorant pro episcopati honore, etiam alterius sumunt munera, et debitores fiunt. Et si contingerit orta intentio de duabus personis, sic mercantur sui honoris dignitatem, quomodo aliquem uenundent. Et mittunt inter se exploratores, quantam ille largire pecuniam uult."

[71] George Demacopoulos, "Gregory the Great and the Sixth-Century Dispute over the Ecumenical Title," *Theological Studies* 70 (2009), 600–21, at 604–05 discusses in detail the cases of John of Chalcedon and Athanasius of Isauria, found guilty of heresy by a Synod of

his crimes, and not for health reasons, even if he had lost his mind, as Bishop Aetherius of Lyons alleged of one of his confreres. Not even Queen Brunichild's wish that the bishop be deposed convinced Gregory, although he conceded that this unnamed bishop should be allowed to resign voluntarily.[72]

Gregory wrote various letters concerning the treatment of clerics who were undergoing the sacrament of penance. He admonished the subdeacon Peter, his vicar in Sicily, to see to it that Marcellus of the Barutanian church, who had been assigned penance in the monastery of St. Adrian in the Sicilian city of Panormus, be given sufficient food, clothing, and bedding, and that provision also be made for Marcellus' manservant (*Reg.* 1.18). A second letter was addressed to the same Peter concerning the disposal of property belonging to lapsed clergy who were undergoing penance (*Reg.* 1.44). These clergy were to be housed in monasteries with sufficient resources to support themselves. The third was addressed to Bishop Venantius in Luna, Etruria, in November 594, recommending that the deposed deacon and abbot of the Port of Venus should never be restored to sacred orders.[73] Gregory also ruled there that sub-deacons could never be restored to their office, although they might receive communion among the laity.[74] In a letter to Bishop Constantius of Milan, he advises: "If permission is granted to the lapsed to return to their orders, the strength of canonical discipline is doubtless shattered, since no one will fear to conceive the desire for evil acts if there is hope of restoration."[75]

Control of Episcopal Appointments

Part of the way that Gregory extended his powers throughout Italy was through control of episcopal elections, especially in the remote islands

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Constantinople. See also Chris Hanlon, "The Horizons of a Bishop's World: The Letters of Gregory the Great," in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church 4: The Spiritual Life*, eds Wendy Mayer, Pauline Allen, and Lawrence Cross (Strathfield, NSW, 2006), pp. 339–49, at 341.

[72] *Reg.* 13.7; 13.8. The case is discussed by John A. Eidenschink, *The Election of Bishops in the Letters of Gregory the Great*, Canon Law Studies 215 (Washington DC, 1945), pp. 57–58.

[73] Cf. *Reg.* 5.18 (CCSL 140:286), where the deacon is identified as Jobinus.

[74] *Reg.* 5.17 (CCSL 140:284). Similarly, *Reg.* 4.26 to Januarius (CCSL 140:245). Both letters (*Reg.* 5.17 and 5.18) are discussed by Patrick Saint-Roch, *La Pénitence dans les Conciles et les lettres des papes des origines à la mort de Grégoire le grand*, Studi di antichità cristiana (Vatican City, 1991), p. 173 et passim.

[75] *Reg.* 5.18 (CCSL 140:285): "Si lapsis ad suum ordinem reuertendi licentia concedatur, uigor canonicae procul dubio frangitur disciplinae, dum spe reuersionis prauae actionis desideria quisque concipere non formidat."

of Sicily and Corsica which were under Roman control.[76] Challenges to Gregory's authority from the dioceses of Sicily required him to articulate the basis for the authority he claimed over Italian bishops. He spent the first five years of his pontificate installing his own candidates in vacated sees subject to Rome, but then stepped back, allowing incumbents to do their jobs there with less interference. His hasty appointment of Peter as papal vicar to oversee the patrimonies and appointment of bishops in Sicily upon his consecration in September 590 was a case in point. Maximian of Syracuse was appointed to replace him just over a year later.[77] The papal estates in Italy and Sicily were important sources of revenue for the pope's "good works", providing food, clothing, shelter, and alms to the poor, as well as financially supporting the clergy.

Gregory's intervention in appointments outside of Rome's control is a more striking novelty. In Sardinia, he instructed the metropolitan bishop not to appoint all bishops from the clergy of his own church in Cagliari.[78] In the powerful see of Milan, Gregory rejected King Agilulf's chosen candidate, since the king was an Arian.[79] Gregory's choice, Deusdedit, was unanimously elected. He tried unsuccessfully from 593 to 594 to prevent Constantinople from installing its own candidate, Maximus, in Salona, an archbishopric in Croatia that had long been filled by Rome's candidates.[80]

Slavery

The possession of slaves by the Church of Rome on its extensive rural estates made the pope perhaps the biggest slave-owner in the western Empire. The papal patrimony had been amplified by the acquisition of Arian churches and estates formerly owned by the Ostrogoths. Several of Gregory's letters respond to appeals against agents (*actores*) whose job it was to acquire papal slaves. In *Reg.* 1.53 Gregory seeks to help Gaudiosus and his wife Sirica, an ex-slave, whose sons have been claimed as slaves by the papal agents. Sirica claims that she had been manumitted before she

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[76] Eidenschink, *Election*, pp. 29–44; on Sicilian elections, see Richards, *Popes and the Papacy*, pp. 342–62, esp. 361: "Of the 14 elections known to have occurred in Sicily under Gregory, six, including Boniface of Rhegium's appointment to Carina, were certainly Gregorian patronage appointments; two were probably so (Trajan of Melita and John of Panorum) and one was possibly (Secundinus of Tauromenium)."

[77] Peter: *Reg.* 1.1 (CCSL 140:1); Maximian: *Reg.* 2.5 (CCSL 140:93) and 4.11 (CCSL 140:228–30).

[78] *Reg.* 14.2 to his *defensor* in Sardinia (CCSL 140A:1067).

[79] *Reg.* 11.6 to the Milanese clergy (CCSL 140A:868).

[80] Demacopoulos, "Sixth-Century Dispute," pp. 606–07.

gave birth to the boys,[81] which made her sons freeborn. Gregory's interests were not confined to Romans. He intervened on behalf of a debt-ridden Syrian whose sons had been sold into slavery (*Reg.* 4.43). He authorized his agents to buy slaves from the pagan Barbaricini in Sardinia to work in a Roman parish's ministry to the poor (*Reg.* 9.124).[82] His rulings on the ownership of Christian slaves firmly endorse the Justinianic principle that "no Jews are permitted to have Christian slaves",[83] while eschewing fines or the death penalty imposed by Justinianic law—Serfass demonstrates that his major concern is the Christian slaves' spiritual welfare.[84] Conversely, Jewish slaves of Christian masters who refused to convert to Christianity could be punished by torture (*Reg.* 9.205).

Crisis Management: Famine, Flood, Plague and War

Gregory's many letters are rich in material that is conspicuously absent in the letters of early 6th-century Roman bishops. For instance, Gregory petitioned the emperor on behalf of Sardinian landowners who were unable to bear the increasing burden of imperial taxes. After the flooding of the Tiber River in 589, he petitioned the governor of Sicily for grain supplies, desperately needed in the capital buffeted by waves of plague and famine. Gregory's successor Sabinian (604–06) charged such extortionate prices for grain at a time of serious famine that the Roman citizenry tried to disrupt his funeral procession with a riot. The author of *LP* glosses over this, merely mentioning that Sabinian opened the church's granaries and made corn available for the price of thirty *modii* for one solidus.

Gregory also helped the nameless poor of Rome through distributions of food—grain, wine, cheese, vegetables, meat, fish, and oil—and sending out from the Lateran palace a "meals on wheels" service for the sick. However, the record of such actions is preserved in his 9th-century *Vita*, not in his *Registrum*. It is Gregory's interventions on behalf of the *déclassé* rich in the *Vita Gregorii* that have been noted in recent scholarship.[85]

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[81] Sirica's manumission was given by her mistress via letter: *Reg.* 1.53 (CCSL 140:66).

[82] Serfass, "Slavery," 87.

[83] *Reg.* 2.45 (CCSL 140:137): "eis [Hebraeis] Christiana mancipia habere non liceat". See also *Reg.* 4.21 to Venantius, bishop of Luna in Etruria (CCSL 140:239).

[84] Serfass, "Slavery," 99.

[85] *Vita Gregorii* 2.28 (PL 75:97C); Peter R.L. Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire*, The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures (Hanover NH—London, 2002), p. 60 and n. 64.

Richards singles Gregory out from other bishops of Rome as one whose exercise of charity extended far beyond the city itself, and to people of all backgrounds and conditions.[86] In his letters we find Gregory helping the formerly wealthy as often as he helped the perennially poor: gentlewomen of Campania (1.39), a governor who had fled his office in Samnium (2.28), a lawyer from Naples (9.136), the blind son of a farmer-soldier (*colonus*) (3.55), a debt-ridden Syrian whose sons had been sold into slavery (4.43), and the children of a Jewish convert, already mentioned above.[87] The refugees with whom he shared his table were almost certainly of the upper class.[88] Gregory's annual subsidy of 80 pounds of gold for 3000 Roman nuns[89] can be seen as contributing to the welfare of the Church in the same way as his financial support for clerics. The main focus in the *Registrum*, however, is on Gregory's interventions on behalf of the (formerly) rich and the clergy.

Formerly wealthy recipients of Gregory's largesse include Filimuth, "son of a most worthy gentleman, who is blind and short of provisions", to whom Gregory allocates 20 casks of wine, 24 measures of wheat and 12 of beans.[90] In several letters, we find Gregory intervening on behalf of rich widows, including Theodora the widow of Petronius, a former church secretary (*Reg.* 1.63), and Palatina (*Reg.* 1.57).[91] In a petition to the exarch of Africa, Gregory advocates for clerics in Porto Torres, Sardinia, who—along with the unnamed poor—have been badly hit by sharp rises in the cost of commodities.[92] Pastor, who is nearly blind but has to support a wife and slaves, receives a gift of wheat and beans.[93] The bishops of Sicily are exempted from transport payments imposed by "false defenders (*defensores*) of the apostolic see".[94] Jewish converts to Christianity also

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[86] Richards, *Popes and the Papacy*, p. 54.

[87] *Reg.* 1.39; 2.38; 3.55; 4.28; 4.31; 4.43; 9.136.

[88] John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii*, 2.24–30 (PL 75:96D–98A).

[89] John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* 2.27 (PL 75:97B–C); Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*, p. 60, states that they were refugees who had settled in Rome, citing (n. 62) *Reg.* 7.23 (CCSL 140A:476).

[90] *Reg.* 1.44 (CCSL 140:58): "<Filimuth uirum dignissimum> non solum amissione uisus sed etiam inopie uictus egestatem pati conspeximus...". We note that the phrase "uirum dignissimum" is not present in all manuscripts, and is found only in the *apparatus criticus* of CCSL 140:58 l. 6.

[91] Theodora: CCSL 140:73; Palatina: CCSL 140:69. See also *Reg.* 1.60; 1.61; 1.62 (CCSL 140:71–73).

[92] *Reg.* 1.59 (CCSL 140:70–71).

[93] *Reg.* 1.65 to Peter, a cleric (CCSL 140:74–75).

[94] *Reg.* 1.68 (CCSL 140:77): "simulantes se sedis apostolicae defensores"; cf. 9.22 to the defensor Romanus (CCSL 140A:582).

merited Gregory's charitable concern. Cyriacus and his wife, a Jewish convert, bore a letter of recommendation to Gregory's vicar in Sicily, so that they might be treated fairly.[95]

In the crisis caused by the Lombard threat to Rome, Gregory undertook various actions typically assigned to the emperor: appointing commandants for imperial garrisons charged with defending Rome in 592, paying the imperial garrison from the church's treasury, buying peace from the duke of Spoleto for 500 pounds of gold, and negotiating peace between the new exarch of Italy and the Lombards in 598. Logan sums up the pope's achievements in the theatre of war this way:[96]

> When the Lombard duke of Spoleto threatened Rome, it was Gregory who took control, dispatched troops and tactical advice to the imperial commander in the field. When in 592 the exarch [Romanus] refused to appoint commandants at Lepe and Naples, which were key to the imperial defences of Rome, it was Gregory who sent Leontius and Constantius to take charge of the imperial garrisons. When, at the same time, the garrison in Rome was near mutiny for lack of pay, it was Gregory who paid them from the church's treasury.

For Logan, these achievements are proof of a shift to a medieval model of leadership, in which the bishop of Rome exercised powers equivalent to those of a secular monarch. However, he is right to judge Gregory's actions as extensions of pastoral care to the practical end of securing the safety and well-being of the people of Rome, rather than enlarging the power of the papacy for its own sake.[97] For Gregory, as for Leo the Great, the city and its people were coterminous with the Church of Rome.[98]

Relationship with the Wider Church

Gregory's relationship with the emperor in Constantinople and the imperial exarch in Ravenna proved equally challenging as his domestic concerns. Gregory sought to maintain his authority within the wider Church through his rulings on doctrinal controversies, and his missions to churches in England, Lombardy and Francia.

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[95] *Reg.* 1.69 to Peter the Subdeacon (CCSL 140:77–78).

[96] Logan, *History of the Church*, p. 50.

[97] Logan, *History of the Church*, p. 50.

[98] E.g. Leo I, *hom.* 82B on the Feast of the Apostles, trans. Neil, pp. 115–18 (ed. Antoine Chavasse, *Sancti Leonis magni Romani pontificis tractatus septem et nonaginta*, CCSL 138A [Turnhout, 1973], pp. 508–18).

Gregory's relationship with the Church of Constantinople has been treated by Matthew dal Santo in this volume, so here we will limit our focus to imperial approval of Gregory's election. In the late-6th century the bishop of Rome's relationship with Constantinople was increasingly conditioned by its relations with the Lombards. The impact of the Lombard invasions even disrupted the traditional request for the Byzantine emperor's approval of a papal candidate before his consecration. Relations with Constantinople had reached an all-time low during the pontificate of Vigilius (537–55), who had recanted on the *Three Chapters* Controversy, and refused to follow the emperor's decree on the matter. The archdeacon Pelagius (later Pelagius I) had been the candidate of Narses, chosen to replace the recalcitrant Vigilius. As a consequence, he was not accepted by the Roman clergy or the nobility, and the Roman bishops refused to ordain him. "Since there were no bishops who would ordain him, two bishops were found, John of Perusia and Bonus of Ferentinum, and Andrew, a priest from Ostia; these ordained him pontiff".[99] Without a church to lead, Pelagius I had to avow his innocence in public before the entire populace and the plebs, before they would enter into communion with him. The Lombard incursions posed another major problem to bishops of Rome from 567, with one major northern Italian city after another falling to the invaders. According to *LP*, "[Pelagius II] was ordained without the emperor's mandate because the Lombards were besieging Rome and causing much devastation in Italy."[100] Gregory's own election took almost seven months to be ratified.[101]

Rome's relationship with Ravenna continued to be vexed by disagreement and rivalry during Gregory's pontificate, and these long-standing difficulties were obvious in Gregory's fraught relationship with the Byzantine exarch Romanus.[102] In 595 Romanus accused the pope of treason for negotiating an armistice with the Lombards in his absence, earning the

[99] Trans. Davis, p. 61 (*LP* 1:303): "Et dum non essent episcopi qui eum ordinarent, inventi sunt duo episcopi, Iohannis de Perusia et Bonus de Ferentino et Andreas presbiter de Hostis et ordinaverunt eum pontificem."

[100] Davis, trans., p. 63 (*LP* 1:309): "Hic ordinatur absque iussione principis eo quod Langobardi obsederunt civitatem Romanam et multa vastatio ab eis in Italia fieret."

[101] Gregory's election was not ratified by the emperor until September, almost seven months after the death of Pelagius II from the plague. Gregory wrote to the emperor Maurice asking to be excused from the office of pope, according to Gregory of Tours, *HF* 10.1 (MGH SSRM 1.1.2, p. 478).

[102] See Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 104–06.

pope a reprimand from Emperor Maurice for foolishness.[103] By waiting until he had the new exarch's approval for the new peace he had negotiated with the Lombards in 598, Gregory demonstrated his loyalty to the Byzantine Empire.

The Church of Ravenna claimed certain privileges that not even Rome could contest. Gregory's success in installing his own candidate in the see, the Roman monk from Gregory's monastery of St. Andrew's, Marinian, caused widespread disquiet, not least with the exarch whose wishes he opposed. A long-running dispute between Gregory and John II of Ravenna over the latter's right to wear the *pallium*—a stole that symbolized Roman episcopal authority—revealed the cracks in the apparent good relationship between the two sees. Ravenna was a metropolitan see, meaning that it could ordain its own bishops. Previous popes had conferred the *pallium* on Ravenna's bishop, but John II assumed the right to wear it at all times, according to the eastern custom, as he claimed, and not just in the Mass. He did not wait for Gregory to give him permission, and refused to change his behaviour in the face of threats from Gregory that he would have to render his account to God at the last judgement. Presumably Rome liked to confer the *pallium* in order to preserve a semblance of authority over such a powerful neighbour. Eidenschink's claim that the primacy of the pope over the entire church at this time was unquestioned seems to me to be invalid, even though he was right to say that Gregory "made frequent use of his rights as successor of St. Peter".[104] Rather, Gregory objected to John of Constantinople's arrogation of the title of "universal patriarch", reminding him that only Rome, Alexandria and Antioch could claim apostolic credentials, due to their close links with St. Peter, while Constantinople's second place of honour depended on imperial authority.[105] He refused the same title for himself, arguing to Eulogius of Alexandria that if one patriarch is called universal, the title is diminished for the rest of the patriarchs.[106] "My honour is the honour of the universal Church. My honour is the solid strength of my brethren. Then have I truly been honoured,

[103] *Reg.* 5.36 (CCSL 140:304–05). Gregory remarked to Sebastian, a bishop in Dalmatia, that the exarch's ill-will towards him was "worse than Lombard swords": *Reg.* 5.40 (CCSL 140:319): "Breuiter tamen dico quia eius in nos malitia gladios Langobardorum vicit."

[104] Eidenschink, *Election*, pp. 1–2.

[105] For a balanced assessment of the controversy, see Demacopoulos, "Sixth-Century Dispute," 620–21.

[106] See Hanlon, "Horizons," pp. 340–42.

when the honour owed to each individual is not denied."[107] By appealing to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch to use their influence against the pride of John IV (582–95) and later Cyriacus (596–606) (*Reg.* 5.41), and reiterating the authority of Church councils, Gregory laid the basis for a real collegiality between the five patriarchs of the pentarchy.[108]

Gregory's dispute in Constantinople with Patriarch Eutychius over the nature of the resurrection body gave him a distaste for Greek sophistry in theological matters,[109] even though his own belief in the fully corporeal nature of the resurrection body was eventually upheld by Emperor Tiberius II. Gregory was also embroiled in the fallout of the *Three Chapters* controversy. Moorhead notes that Gregory's identification in *Moralia* of the three friends of Job with heretics may indicate disquiet over the unresolved dispute over the *Three Chapters* that was greater than is usually thought.[110] Unlike his predecessors Leo, Gelasius, and Hormisdas, Gregory seems to have become embroiled in such controversies with some reluctance.

Linked to his concern for doctrinal purity was Gregory's concern to convert pagans, Arian Christians and Jews. Gregory's missions to England, the Franks and the Lombards are treated in this volume by Cristina Ricci. Suffice it to note here that Gregory sent letters of congratulation on their conversions from Arian to Catholic Christianity to King Reccared of Spain, and later to Adaloald, future heir to the Lombard throne. Gregory was also concerned to convert "worshippers of idols" (*idolorum cultores*), which included Jews, even at the point of torture, if they happened to be

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[107] *Reg.* 8.29 to Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria, trans. Martyn, 3:525 (CCSL 140A:552): "Meus namque honor est honor uniuersalis ecclesiae. Meus honor est fratrum meorum solidus uigor. Tunc ego uere honoratus sum, cum singulis quibusque honor debitus non negatur."

[108] Demacopoulos, "Sixth-Century Dispute," 621: "In sum, Gregory's correspondence throughout the controversy denied the universalist claims of any bishop, including the bishop of Rome; but it also promoted a greater sense of Petrine authority than many contemporary Orthodox would be willing to accept."

[109] Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome*, p. 11, puts it more strongly: "The affair with Patriarch Eutychius would cause Gregory to leave Constantinople with a bitter taste for the theological speculation of the East that would extend to an almost virulent dislike of the Greek language and a deep suspicion toward the disingenuous Orientals." The dispute is discussed in Matthew dal Santo's chapter *infra*.

[110] John Moorhead, *Gregory the Great*, The Early Church Fathers (Abingdon—New York, 2005), p. 27.

slaves of Christian masters.[111] If they were freeborn, Jews were to be protected from forced conversions.[112]

Conclusion: A Byzantine Model of Leadership?

In the pontificate and crisis-management style of Gregory the Great we find a long process of transition to a new style of papal leadership brought to completion. To what extent did Gregory embody Greek rather than Roman ideals of episcopal leadership? Some scholars, such as Ekonomou, emphasize the Byzantine character of his pontificate: "First as a monk and then as 'teacher, protector, sustainer, and father of the believers entrusted to his care', Gregory patterned himself on the eastern ideal of a bishop."[113] If a Byzantine patriarch was characterized by fidelity to the emperor in Constantinople, then Gregory was certainly a Byzantine. He had good diplomatic relations with Anastasius of Antioch and with Emperor Maurice, for whose son he was chosen to be godfather. His distrust of the exarch Romanus can be explained mostly by the fact that Romanus seemed to him to put the interests of Ravenna before those of Rome. While Gregory's allegiances were naturally influenced by his own contact with eastern monasticism, he reserved the right to make his own judgments on matters of orthodoxy, rather than blindly following Constantinople's lead.[114] He strongly resisted the claims of Constantinople's bishop to the title of "ecumenical patriarch".

Gregory's pontificate was not, as Ullmann posited, the beginning of a distinctly medieval brand of papacy, marked by popes whose secular authority extended into civil matters and went well beyond the bounds of the city.[115] This extension of powers was, as we have seen, well under way by the pontificates of Leo and Gelasius in the 5th century. It is implicit in Gregory's letters and actions that he respected his predecessor Gelasius' "two swords" theory, emphasizing the strict separation between the secular power of the emperor and the spiritual power of the church. That this

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[111] *Reg.* 9.205 (CCSL 140A:764).

[112] *Reg.* 1.45 to Virgilius of Arles and Theodore of Marseilles (CCSL 140:59).

[113] Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome*, p. 24 and n. 243, where he cites Vera von Falkenhausen, "Bishops," in *The Byzantines*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo, English translation (Chicago, 1997), p. 172.

[114] The same could be said of Popes Leo I and Vigilius.

[115] Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power*, 3rd ed. (London, 1970); idem, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972; repr. 2003).

did not prevent Gelasius from being involved in temporal affairs in Rome is evident from his correspondence. Durliat surely finds the right balance by making a distinction between how Gregory was perceived in his own day, and how he was constructed in the Middle Ages:[116]

> In the eyes of his contemporaries, Gregory appeared to be the model of the western Byzantine patriarch, faithful to the emperor while at the same time being spokesman for populations placed under his religious and administrative authority, in discussion with the Germanic kings only if their relations with the sovereign from Constantinople were good or nonexistent. After his death, he was increasingly presented as the staunch manager of papal patrimonies that represented the earliest foundations of the Papal States...

Gregory represented the temporal interests of Rome when it became obvious that these were being neglected by the exarch of Ravenna. Rather than considering Gregory the first medieval pope, we might better consider him a late-antique patriarch who successfully negotiated the See of Rome's right to govern itself independently from Byzantium, the first bishop of Rome to achieve this status after Justinian's "restoration" of Italy. The Gothic wars had freed the bishop of Rome from being a pawn of the Gothic kings. Rather than being a disillusioned monk giving in to dispirited apocalypticism in the face of the many threats to Rome and its church at the turn of the 6th century, Gregory I was a bishop determined to make the best of a bad situation, with his eye fixed firmly on the affairs of the Church in this world, as well as on the spiritual health of Rome and the wider Church.

[116] Durliat, "Gregory I," p. 641. For the view that Gregory is properly seen as a Byzantine patriarch, see also Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages*, pp. 141 and 316.

CHAPTER TWO

GREGORY'S MISSIONS TO THE BARBARIANS

Cristina Ricci

When Gregory was ordained bishop, Rome—though in theory still one of the empire's dual capitals—had become in fact a provincial town, subject to the imperial government in Constantinople. Its representatives in Italy, the exarchs based in Ravenna, were sometimes perceived as corrupt and uninterested in Rome's fortunes. As a result, Gregory took on a leadership role that was not only pastoral and spiritual, but also civic and political.[1] This combination of roles characterized his relationships with the Lombards, Visigoths, Franks and Anglo-Saxons settled in the territories of the former Roman Empire.

In order to avoid misunderstandings in such an ideological "minefield" as that of the relationships between the Romans and other peoples, a few preliminary clarifications on the use of some terms derived from our sources are appropriate. Gregory used the terms *gentes* and *barbari* to refer to non-Romans, following a terminology common in the Latin sources.[2] The term "barbarians", devoid of its original negative connotations, will thus be used here, in addition to "Germans", when referring to peoples such as the Lombards, Visigoths, Franks and Anglo-Saxons.[3]

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[1] For a recent overview of Byzantine Italy and the functions carried out by Gregory, see Rade Kisić, *Patria Caelestis. Die eschatologische Dimension der Theologie Gregors des Großen* (Tübingen, 2011), pp. 37–52; Bronwen Neil, "The Papacy in the Age of Gregory the Great", and Matthew Dal Santo, "Gregory the Great, the Empire and the Emperor", both in this volume. With regards to Gregory, I will use the terms "bishop" (of Rome) and "pontiff" interchangeably.

[2] E.g. *HEz.* 1.11.6 (CCSL 142:171 l. 143): *barbarorum gladiis*; *Dial.* 3.6.2 (SC 260:278 l. 15): *rex barbarus*; *Reg.* 6.51 (CCSL 140:423 l. 4): *gens* referred to a non-Roman people; for *gentes* with the meaning of "pagans", see *Mor.* 7.10.11 (CCSL 143:342); *Mor.* 18.31.50 (CCSL 143A:918) etc. In general, see Ilona Opelt and Wolfgang Speyer, "Barbar I," *RAC* Suppl. 1 (2001), 811–95.

[3] Defining "barbarian" or "German" identities in Late Antiquity is complicated because of the multiplicity of factors involved (language, culture, ethnic descent, political organization etc.). Current-day social and political issues have also impinged. See Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen* (München, 2000), pp. 1–10; Ian Wood, "Barbarians, Historians, and the Construction of National Identities", *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), 61–81. For a brief up-to-date account on the Visigoths, Lombards, Franks and Anglo-Saxons see Hans-Werner

Furthermore, following Gregory's terminology, we will define as "pagan" all non-Christian (and non-Judaic) cults. Finally, we will use the term "Arian" for the type of "Homoean" Christianity widespread among the "Germans" and distinct from the "Nicene" Christianity professed by the Roman Church.

Gregory and the Visigoths[4]

The Visigoths came to south-western Europe (first Italy, then southern Gaul) near the beginning of the 5th century, and by the middle of the 6th had established their sovereignty over most of Spain in the so-called Kingdom of Toledo. In 589, King Reccared (586–601) convoked a council of Spanish bishops (subsequently called the Council of Toledo). The council sanctioned the official acceptance of Catholicism by the Visigoths, who were mostly Arian. This turning point followed the conversion of Reccared himself who, after succeeding his father Leovigild (568–86), adopted religious policies opposed to those of Leovigild, a strong supporter of Arianism. But both kings conceived of their opposing policies as pursuing the same purpose: the integration of their people into the local Hispanic-Roman population.

The influence of Leander, bishop of Seville (579–601), not only on Reccared but also on his brother Hermenegild, was decisive in the shift towards Catholicism. Hermenegild, after his father had appointed him regent of

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Goetz, *Europa im frühen Mittelalter 500–1050* (Stuttgart, 2003), pp. 37–40, 44–46, 49–73 (esp. 50–56), and 42–43 respectively.

[4] For the Church in Spain, see Knut Schäferdiek, *Die Kirche in den Reichen der Westgoten und Suewen bis zur Errichtung der westgotischen katholischen Staatskirche* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 137–57, and 192–233. On the people mentioned here and their relationships with Gregory, see "Ermenegildus," in *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (*PLRE*), eds Arnold H.M. Jones and John R. Martindale (Cambridge, 1971–92), 3A:449–50; "Leovigildus," *PLRE* 3B:782–85; "Reccaredus I," *PLRE* 3B:1079–80; Georg Jenal, "Ermenegildo" and "Leovigildo," in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, eds Giuseppe Cremascoli and Antonella Degl'Innocenti (Florence, 2008), p. 132 and pp. 203–04; Valentina Lunardini, "Leandro di Siviglia," ibid., p. 201; Antonio Cacciari, "Reccaredo," ibid., p. 291. On Gregory and Spain see also Frederick Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great. His Place in History and Thought*, 2 vols (London, 1905), 1:403–14; Jeffrey Richards, *Consul of God. The Life and Times of Gregory the Great* (London, 1980), pp. 209–12; Josep Vilella Masana, "Gregorio Magno e Hispania," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 33–34 (Rome, 1991), 1:167–86; Domingo Ramos-Lissón, "Grégoire le grand, Léandre et Reccarède," ibid., 1:187–98; Claudio Azzara, *L'ideologia del potere regio nel papato altomedievale (secoli VI–VIII)* (Spoleto, 1997), pp. 96–100, 143–45; Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 164–68; Barbara Müller, *Führung im Denken und Handeln Gregors des Grossen* (Tübingen, 2009), pp. 95–99.

Seville, clashed with Leovigild. Among the reasons for this conflict is often cited Hermenegild's decision to forsake Arianism, probably prompted by his own Catholic wife and by Leander.[5] In 583, Leovigild besieged Seville and Cordova and imprisoned his son, whom he then murdered for not renouncing his new faith.

These dramatic events are narrated in hagiographical tones in Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*, where Hermenegild is called a "king and martyr"[6] and his bloody death is portrayed as a sacrifice destined to produce new conversions like that of his brother Reccared and, as a consequence, of his own people.[7]

It appears that by 591 Gregory already knew about the conversion of the Visigoths: in a letter of this time to Leander,[8] his friend since a mutual sojourn in Constantinople (580–c.586) and probably also his best informer on religious matters in Spain, Gregory urged him to ensure that Reccared accomplished the good work begun with his acceptance of Catholicism.[9]

Warm recommendations against pride and in support of orthodoxy in the Visigothic kingdom are found in the only letter that Gregory wrote to Reccared, dated August 599.[10] The reason why the pontiff wrote this letter such a long time (ten years) after the Council of Toledo is still an open question: perhaps because he did not want to interfere in the close but fragile relationships that existed between the Visigothic monarchy and the Catholic Roman-Hispanic hierarchy, chiefly represented by Leander. He may also have been loath to get involved in a diplomatic controversy, in view of the fact that the Byzantine empire, whose subject Gregory was, also ruled a strip of coastal Spain.[11] However, the delay may simply have been occasional. In fact, Gregory mentioned some gifts sent by Reccared

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[5] See Greg. Tur., *HF* 5.38 (ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SSRM 1.1 [Hannover, 1937], p. 244.15–17). On the reasons for this conflict see Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409–711* (Malden, MA, 2004), pp. 56–58.

[6] *Dial.* 3.31.5 (SC 260:386): "corpus eiusdem regis et martyris... atque ideo ueraciter regis quia martyris." For Hermenegild's story see *Dial.* 3.31 (SC 260:384–90).

[7] See *Dial.* 3.31.7–8 (SC 260:388–90). On the contrary, see Leovigild's case, ibid., 6 (SC 260:388): "uera esset fides catholica agnouit, sed gentis suae timore perterritus ad hanc peruenire non meruit."

[8] See. *Reg.* 5.53a (eds Paul Ewald and Ludwig Hartmann, MGH Reg. 1 [Hannover, 1891], p. 353) and *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, trans. John R.C. Martyn, Mediaeval Sources in Translation 40, 3 vols (Toronto, 2004), 2:379, n. 208.

[9] *Reg.* 1.41 (CCSL 140:48): "erga eundem suum [scil. Reccaredum] uestra sollertius sanctitas uigilet, ut bene coepta perficiat, nec se de perfectis bonis operibus extollat, ut fidem cognitam uitae quoque meritis teneat."

[10] *Reg.* 9.229 (CCSL 140A:805–09).

[11] Ibid. (CCSL 140A:810–811 ll. 137–151).

that initially did not reach their destination because of some obstacles along the way, but later arrived; hence, he wrote to thank the sovereign, but above all to offer for his edification a Christian ethic in government, inspired by the biblical model of the king-shepherd, who rules over the flock of his subjects with moderation and solicitude for their orthodox faith.

Unlike his extensive dealings with the Lombards, Franks and Anglo-Saxons, Gregory's dealings with the Visigoths were infrequent and mainly transactional. They appear to have been too distant to have played an important part in any of the pope's wider objectives. The Visigoths do, however, seem to have occupied an important place in Gregory's mind in connection with Catholic orthodoxy. His letter to Reccared, which extolled his conversion and represented him as a model and guide for his people, resonates with the story about Hermenegild that Gregory had narrated five or six years earlier in the *Dialogi*.[12] As we have seen, Gregory represented the prince as a "martyr" who died for the faith after revolting against his heretical father and king, Leovigild. That this story was designed to strengthen his audience's commitment to orthodoxy in the face of "barbarian heresy" is suggested by the fact that it was strategically inserted among some anecdotes regarding the conflict between Catholic Romans and Arians or pagans, most of whom were Lombards.[13]

Gregory and the Lombards[14]

In 568 the Lombards invaded the Italian peninsula. They settled mainly in the North, but also gained control of portions of the centre and south, including the important duchies of Spoleto and Benevento. Rome and most of the coastal areas remained under imperial control. In Gregory's relationship with the Lombards three things are immediately apparent: the diverse typology of the sources that document this relationship (*Registrum epistolarum, Dialogi, Homiliae in Hiezechielem* and *in Euangelia*);

[12] The *Dialogi* were written in 593/94.

[13] *Dial.* 3.27–32 (SC 260:372–92); see also de Vogüé's introduction to the *Dialogi* (SC 251:40).

[14] On the Lombards and Gregory's relationship with them, see Dudden, *Gregory*, 1:80–98, 158–86, and 2:3–42; Richards, *Consul of God*, pp. 181–94; Claudio Azzara, "Gregorio, i Longobardi e l'Occidente barbarico. Costanti e peculiarità di un rapporto," *Bollettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo* 97 (1991), 1–74; Markus, *Gregory*, pp. 97–107 and 137–40; Walter Pohl (ed.), *Kingdoms of the Empire: the Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 75–77 and 103–12; Müller, *Führung*, pp. 28–85, 314–18 and 390–91; Martyn, *Letters*, 1:30–32.

its wide chronological spectrum, which corresponds to the whole duration of Gregory's pontificate; finally the complexity of the personal, political and pastoral components that characterized this relationship. The *Registrum epistolarum* allows us to follow the development of the relationship from the beginning of Gregory's papacy until almost the end (from September 590 to December 603).[15] The picture that emerges from Gregory's writings is enriched by other sources, such as the *Historia Langobardorum* by Paul the Deacon (written almost two centuries later) and the *Liber Pontificalis*, especially where it deals with Gregory's biography.[16]

The beginnings of the "Lombard question" go back to the period before Gregory's pontificate; in fact, in a letter of 595 to the Empress Constantina, he complained that Rome had been afflicted by the Lombards' swords for almost twenty-seven years.[17] Tales of devastation and abuses carried out by the Lombards even before the beginning of Gregory's pontificate are narrated in the *Dialogi*. An example is Gregory's description of the destruction of the Monte Cassino monastery, apparently based on an account given to the pontiff by one of the monks who had escaped the Lombard assault and taken shelter in Rome.[18] In narrating such stories, Gregory bestowed a hagiographical aura on those—bishops, monks, or ordinary people[19]—who fell victim to the barbarians' violence. In so doing, he probably wanted to show the Catholic faith as a force for resistance and cohesion in the chaos of a society decimated by massacres—mostly caused by the Lombards—and lacking any form of protection both at the social and military level.

An indication of these intentions can be found in the way the author accounts for cases of opposition by the indigenous Christians towards pagan cults imposed on them by the Lombard rulers. In this regard, two

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[15] The first letter (September 590) is *Reg.* 1.3 (CCSL 140:3–4); the last one (December 603) is *Reg.* 14.12 (CCSL 140A:1082–83).

[16] *LP* 66 (ed. Louis Duchesne [Paris, 1886–92], 1:312–14). On the relationship between Gregory and the Lombards and the peace of 598, see Paul. Diac., *HL* 4.8–9 (MGH SSRL, pp. 118–20).

[17] *Reg.* 5.39 (CCSL 140:316): "Viginti autem iam et septem annos ducimus, quod in hac urbe inter Langobardorum gladios uiuimus."

[18] See *Dial.* 2.17.1–2 (SC 260:192) and the testimony of the Chronicle of the Monte Cassino monastery written by Leo Marsicanus: *Chron. mon. Cas.* 1.2 (ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, MGH SS 7 [Hannover, 1846; repr. Stuttgart, New York, 1963], pp. 580–81): "Fugientes itaque ex eodem coenobio fratres, Romam profecti sunt... Atque ex concessione Romani pontificis Pelagii... iuxta Lateranense patriarchium monasterium statuerunt."

[19] Isolated examples of martyrdoms caused by the Lombard's violence are narrated in *Dial.* 4.23–24 (SC 265:78–80) (murder of Soranus, abbot of Sora; and the beheading of a deacon of Marsica).

episodes involving ordinary people are exemplary: in the first, 40 peasants decline to eat the meat offered by the Lombards to their idols;[20] in the second, 400 prisoners refuse to comply with a pagan rite imposed on them by the Lombard jailers. This rite can probably be identified as a saraband in honour of the warrior god Wotan, accompanied by a chant and by the stabbing of a goat's skin. After the rite was completed—Gregory wrote—the enemies stabbed those who, by declining to participate in this blasphemous ceremony, chose death in the hope of obtaining eternal life.[21]

By placing these episodes in a vague but not too distant past (probably the 570s to 580s) and in unspecified places, the author seems interested in extolling examples of civil resistance "from the bottom up", which go back to the beginnings of the Lombards' domination and which focus—at least from the bishop's perspective, but perhaps also in reality—not on matters of politics, but on ones of faith and religion.[22]

These accounts of idolatry are followed by others regarding the Arian Lombards and their efforts to impose their cult, defined by Gregory as *error*, the same term used for the pagan cult.[23] This happened in Spoleto, for example, where the Arian Lombard bishop, unable to obtain a church from the indigenous Catholics, tried to take possession by force of the church of St. Paul—perhaps located on the site of the present church of St. Paul *inter uineas*.[24] When the bishop arrived with his followers at sunrise one day, the church's doors miraculously opened wide and the internal lamps, which had been extinguished the night before by the local keeper, suddenly turned on with a light diffused from above, blinding the

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[20] *Dial.* 3.27 (SC 260:372–74); for the number 40 in the biblical and hagiographic literature, see ibid., p. 373, note to chapter 27. On pagan rites in the Gregorian *Dialogi*, see Stefano Gasparri, *La cultura tradizionale dei Longobardi. Struttura tribale e resistenze pagane* (Spoleto, 1983), esp. pp. 45–52.

[21] For this episode, which happened around 579 in an unknown place, see *Dial.* 3.28 (SC 260:374).

[22] The idea of civil resistance is suggested also by the expressions used e.g. in *Dial.* 3.27 (SC 260:372.4–8): "Qui cum ualde resisterent... fideliter perstiterunt"; *Dial.* 3.28 (SC 260:374.9): (the multitude of the prisoners) "obtemperare iussis sacrilegis noluit".

[23] See *Dial.* 3.28 (SC 260:374 l. 13) and ibid. 29.2 (SC 260:376 l. 9) with reference respectively to the pagan cult involving a goat's head and the Arian cult.

[24] For this episode, see *Dial.* 3.29.2–4 (SC 260:376–78). With regard to the church of St. Paul, see Letizia Pani Ermini, "Le vicende dell'alto Medioevo," in *Spoleto. Argomenti di storia urbana*, eds Guglielmo de Angelis D'Ossat and Bruno Toscano (Cinisello Balsamo [Milan], 1985), pp. 25–42, at p. 29.

heretic bishop and preventing him from completing his sacrilegious act. Gregory commented:[25]

> The miracle is noteworthy for the way it took place. The lamps of the church had at first been extinguished because of the Arian bishop; then, at the very moment light was restored to the church, the bishop lost his sight.

This epilogue can be read as an example of a re-interpretation of the Bible in hagiographical form and for present concerns: in fact, the blinding of the Arian bishop recalls that of Elymas the magician who, having hindered the apostle Paul's preaching to the proconsul Sergius Paul, was punished with blindness (Acts 13:8–11). The miracle performed to the detriment of the Lombard bishop, based on the dualism "darkness of error" (Arian) / "light of the truth" (Catholic), seems to convey also a message of religious politics: if on one hand the pontiff did not explicitly challenge the territorial dominion of the Lombards, on the other he defended the exclusive rights of indigenous Catholics to the peninsula's religious space, on which the rulers advanced their claims in vain.

Some of Gregory's early letters to Italian bishops suggest that he tried to attract Lombards to the Roman Church.[26] Later, however, he seems to have aimed above all at peaceful cohabitation with the invaders, which was necessary to alleviate the sufferings of the indigenous population, especially those living in the countryside where they were more exposed to the Lombard raids.[27] This emerges from Gregory's correspondence with various figures, both members of the clergy and others, including the Lombard King Agilulf (590–616) and above all his Catholic wife Theodelinda. The combination of missionary and political strategies is particularly evident in the letters to the queen, as will be highlighted later in this chapter.[28]

In the first months of his pontificate (January 591), Gregory wrote to the Italian bishops urging them to promote conversions to Catholicism

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[25] *Dial.* 3.29.4 (SC 260:378): "Miro etenim modo res gesta est, ut, quia eiusdem arriani causa lampades in ecclesia beati Pauli fuerant extinctae, uno eodemque tempore et ipse lumen perderet et in ecclesia lumen rediret." (trans. Odo John Zimmermann, *Saint Gregory the Great, Dialogues*, Fathers of the Church 39 [New York, 1959], p. 164).

[26] See *Reg.* 1.17 and 2.2 (see below, n. 29 and n. 31).

[27] See *Reg.* 9.66 to Agilulf (November–December 598) (CCSL 140A:622.7–9).

[28] See below, text and n. 48 and 57. On the two sovereigns, see "Agilulfus," *PLRE* 3A:27–29; "Theodelinda," *PLRE* 3B:1235–36; Antonio Cacciari, "Agilulfo," in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, p. 4; Valentina Lunardini, "Teodolinda (or Teodelinda)," in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, pp. 347–48; Ross Balzaretti, "Theodelinda, 'most glorious queen': Gender and Power in Lombard Italy", *The Mediaeval History Journal* 2 (1992), 183–207.

among the Lombards.[29] He was worried that those who were not able to be baptized as Catholics because of the prohibition issued by the recently deceased King Autharit would die as heretics, unreconciled with God. The fact that the king had to use his authority to check this process, probably means that Catholicism was growing among the Lombards—perhaps also because of the influence of their Roman subjects.[30] Gregory supposed that God had punished Autharit since he died less than a year after promulgating the aforesaid prohibition and just before Easter, the feast of the resurrection and traditional occasion for the celebration of baptisms.

In the same year (591), which was marked by widespread high mortality, Gregory wrote to the bishop of Narni, Praejecticius, asking him to urge all those in his diocese, including the Lombards, to convert, abandon their error and accept the orthodox faith, so that they could free themselves from spiritual evil and possibly even from a physical one, namely, from the risk of an impending death.[31]

These types of warnings demonstrate the duty of pastoral care that Gregory conceived towards the Lombards. But, naturally, there were also political implications (as we will see later): the more Lombards accepted the Nicene faith, the more, it was hoped, causes of conflict with the Catholic subjects would disappear in favour of peaceful cohabitation.

This dual perspective, pastoral and political, helps us better understand the definition of *Langobardorum episcopus* that Gregory applied to himself in a letter of 591 to John, former consul at Constantinople. The title not only seems to imply that in the territories that made up his diocesan territorial jurisdiction the Lombards were almost prevailing over the indigenous peoples, many of whom had been imprisoned or killed; it also seems to hint at the responsibility, even burden, Gregory felt towards supervising (according to the etymology of the word *episcopus*) and leading to faith a people of pagans and heretics, "whose treaties (*sinthichiae*) are swords (*spatae*) and whose gratitude is revenge".[32]

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[29] *Reg.* 1.17 (CCSL 140:16–17).

[30] See Neil Christie, *The Lombards. The Ancient Longobards* (Oxford, 1995), p. 185; in particular on Autharit's prohibition of baptisms see Dominique Petit, *Histoire sociale des Lombards* (Paris, 2003), p. 4; see also "Authari 2," *PLRE* 3A:158–59 and the entries "Autari," edited by Antonio Cacciari and Georg Jenal, in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, p. 20 and p. 21.

[31] See *Reg.* 2.2 (CCSL 140:90 l. 3) and *Reg.* 1.17 (CCSL 140:17 l. 7), where the current high mortality rate is mentioned.

[32] *Reg.* 1.30 (CCSL 140:37): "sicut peccata mea merebantur, non Romanorum sed Langobardorum episcopus factus sum, quorum sinthichiae spatae sunt et gratia poena" (trans. Martyn, *Letters*, 1:151). See also Pohl, *Kingdoms*, p. 75 and Martyn, *Letters*, 1:151, n. 181. On the etymology of *episcopus* and its link to the concept of "supervision, overseeing", see

The image of the sword recurs in contexts regarding these barbarians, often in formulas such as "enemy swords" and "barbarian swords" (*hostiles gladii, barbarorum gladii*).[33] The sword, apart from its literal meaning, also has a symbolic value which, already in the Bible, is sometimes connected to the idea of punitive justice and other times to martyrdom, as in the case of 400 prisoners slain for rejecting the idolatrous practices imposed on them.[34] Such were the snares laid by the Lombards that the bishop of Rome called them "wolves" (*lupi*): like wolves, they caused slaughter and dispersal of the flock and were the cause of the physical and spiritual death of many Romans.[35]

The biblical metaphor of wolves conveys the idea of "barbarian savagery" (*barbarica feritas*) that Gregory ascribed to the invaders, following the negative opinions the Romans held towards Germanic peoples, whom they also called "barbarians" (*barbari*).[36] The pejorative connotation inherent in this term is also found in Gregory's writings as a typical sign of his Roman aristocratic mentality. However, in his case it is linked more to the Lombards' religion (namely their pagan or Arian error) rather than to their ethics or civil status.

The combination of the terms highlighted above (*barbari, gladii, lupi*) can also be found in a lamentation contained in Gregory's 11th homily on Ezekiel: "I am constrained... to groans by the attacking swords of barbarians, and to fear the wolves that lie in wait for the flock entrusted (to me)."[37] Here the attack of the Lombard swords could hint at King Agilulf's march against Rome (593), mentioned in the foreword to the second book of the *Homiliae in Hiezechielem*,[38] or to previous attacks by Ariulf, duke of Spoleto, denounced by the bishop of Rome in a letter to the bishop of

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Christine Mohrmann, *Episkopos—speculator*, in eadem, *Études sur le Latin des Chrétiens* (Rome, 1958–77), 4:231–52.

[33] See *HEz.* 1.11.6 and 26 (CCSL 142:171 l. 103 and 182 l. 505); also *Reg.* 1.3 (CCSL 140:4 ll. 15–16); 5.37 (CCSL 140:308 l. 16); 5.43 (CCSL 140:328 l. 4); 8.2 (CCSL 140A:516 l. 49); 13.39 (CCSL 140A:1042 l. 25); 13:43 (CCSL 140A:1048 l. 28); *Dial.* 1.4.21 (SC 260:58 l. 253), and ibid. 3.28 (SC 260:374 l. 12). For the biblical symbol of the sword, see Is. 1:20; Jer. 9:16; Ez. 14:21 and 21:9–11; Matt. 10:34 and 26:52.

[34] *Dial.* 3.28 (SC 260:374) (see above, n. 21).

[35] For the biblical symbol of the wolf, see Jer. 5:6; Matt. 7:15; John 10:12; Acts 20:29.

[36] With regards to the *feritas* and *crudelitas* of the Lombards, see e.g. *Reg.* 1.48 (CCSL 140:62 l. 7); 3.30 (CCSL 140:176 ll. 10–11); 11.31 (CCSL 140A:920 l. 12); *Dial.* 3.11.6 (SC 260:296 l. 56).

[37] *HEz.* 1.11.6 (CCSL 142:171): "Cogor... de irruentibus barbarorum gladiis gemere, et commisso gregi insidiantes lupos timere." (Bronwen Neil's translation).

[38] *HEz.* 2, *praef.* (CCSL 142:205): "iam Agilulphum Langobardorum regem ad obsidionem nostram summopere festinantem Padum transisse cognouimus."

Ravenna.[39] More generally, it could refer to the threat continuously posed to Rome and its surrounding areas by the Lombards.

During 592, Ariulf occupied various cities north and south of Spoleto (Perugia, Todi, Amelia, Orte, Sutri), interrupting the communication between Rome and Ravenna. He then moved against the *Urbs*, undefended by imperial troops. Hence, the bishop of Rome was forced to defend the city with arms, and then to begin truce negotiations at the expense of the Roman Church, which were even so hindered by the exarch,[40] who had initiated military operations to re-conquer the cities that had fallen into Lombard hands. As a consequence, the Lombard king, Agilulf, intervened to block the exarch and directed his army first to Perugia and then to Rome. He besieged the *Urbs* between the end of 593 and the beginning of 594. Oppressed by such troubles, Gregory was forced to interrupt his preaching on Ezekiel in order to concentrate on the urgent needs of the moment.[41]

We do not know how the siege ended. According to some chronicles, Agilulf suspended it out of a sort of reverence for the pope.[42] We only learn from Gregory that in 595 the Lombard king seemed to be willing to enter into peace negotiations, but the exarch Romanus (590–96) was opposed to them. Gregory had to avail himself of the mediation of Severus, *scholasticus* of the exarch, in order to convince the latter to adopt a more conciliatory attitude.[43] As a result, Gregory carried the burden of dealing with the invaders and even of ransoming Roman prisoners with Church

[39] *Reg.* 2.38 (July 592) (CCSL 140:122): "Ariulfus ad Romanam urbem ueniens alios occidit, alios detruncauit." See also "Ariulfus" (591/592–601/602), *PLRE* 3A:119–20; Antonio Cacciari, "Ariulfo," in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, p. 18.

[40] See. *Reg.* 2.27 and 28 (CCSL 140:113–15), addressed to the *magistri militum* Vitalian and Maurice (June 592); on the tribute paid for the truce, see *Reg.* 5.36 to Emperor Maurice, June 595 (CCSL 140:304–07).

[41] See *HEz.* 2.10.24 (CCSL 142:397).

[42] See *Auctarii Hauniensis Extrema* 17 (ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA Chron. Min. saec. IV–VII [Berlin, 1892], 1:339): "Postremum [Agilulfus] cum totius robore (robur *in H*) exercitus ad obsidionem urbis Romae perrexit ibique cum beatum Gregorium... sibi ad gradus basilicae beati Petri apostolorum principis occurrentem reperisset, eius (cuius *in H*) precibus fractus et sapientia atque religionis grauitate tanti uiri permotus ab urbis obsidione abscedit." See also Markus, *Gregory*, p. 103; Müller, *Führung*, p. 285.

[43] See *Reg.* 5.34 to Severus (May 595) (CCSL 140:301–02); also *Reg.* 5.40 to Sebastian, bishop of Risano (CCSL 140:319): "Quae... de amici uestri domni Romani persona in hac terra patimur, loqui minime ualemus." On Gregory's relationships with the exarchs, see Martyn, *Letters*, 1:20–23.

funds. There is evidence for this in some letters in which Gregory thanked his benefactors for their financial support.[44]

Romanus' successor Callinicus (596–603)[45] was more inclined to peace agreements. He agreed to a *pax generalis* with King Agilulf and Duke Ariulf. The truce was reached thanks to the mediation of Probus, the abbot of the Roman monasteries of St. Andrew and St. Lucia and a man trusted by the pontiff.[46] Various letters written in 598 refer to these negotiations. One was addressed to the bishop of Cagliari, who was urged to prepare against possible attacks by the Lombards before the armistice was signed; in another, sent to a Ravennan magistrate named Theodore, Gregory complained about the fact that Ariulf, unlike Agilulf, was willing to accept peace only *sub condicione*. Gregory therefore declared that he would not be prepared to add his signature to the truce with Ariulf, afraid as he was of creating a diplomatic incident with the emperor.[47] Not long after this, however, Gregory thanked King Agilulf and his wife, Theodelinda, for their commitment to the agreement just reached. He expressed his gratitude to the queen, who as a Catholic was particularly suitable to mediate between Gregory and Agilulf. He also expressed his confidence that she could convince her husband to make a pact of *amicitia* with the empire.[48]

Six months later (July 599), Gregory confessed to the bishop of Cagliari his fear that the agreement reached in 598 would not be renewed;[49] however, it lasted until March 601, as confirmed by a letter of July 600.[50]

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[44] *Reg.* 5.46 to the benefactor Theodore, the emperor's physician (CCSL 140:339); 7.23 to the benefactors Andrew and Theoctista, the emperor's sister (CCSL 140:477); in *Reg.* 5.30 to Emperor Maurice (CCSL 140:296–97), Gregory thanked the emperor for the money he received to deal with situations of penury and infirmity.

[45] On the two exarchs, see "Callinicus 10," *PLRE* 3A:264–65; "Romanus 7," *PLRE* 3B:1092–93.

[46] With regard to Probus, see Martyn, *Letters*, 2:571, n. 129.

[47] See the letters written in October 598: *Reg.* 9.11 to Januarius, bishop of Cagliari, and 9.44 to Theodore, *curator* in Ravenna (CCSL 140A:572 and 602–03, esp. ll. 28–38).

[48] See *Reg.* 9.66 to Agilulf (CCSL 140A:621–22) and 9.68 to Theodelinda (CCSL 140A:624): "hortamur ut apud excellentissimum coniugem uestrum illa agatis, quatenus christianae reipublicae societatem non rennuat. Nam sicut et uos scire credimus, multis modis est utile, si se ad eius amicitias conferre uoluerit." On the meaning of *amicitia* in the relationships between the empire and other peoples, see Verena Epp, *Amicitia: zur Geschichte personaler, sozialer, politischer und geistlicher Beziehungen im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1999), pp. 176–86, esp. p. 177.

[49] *Reg.* 9.196 (CCSL 140A:752): "Quia uero non minorem de uobis, quam de nobis sollicitudinem gerimus, hoc quoque pariter indicandum curauimus, quod finita hac pace Agilulfus Langobardorum rex pacem non faciat."

[50] *Reg.* 10.16 to Innocentius, Prefect of the Praetorium in Africa (CCSL 140A:845): "sollicitudinem uestram desiderato nuntio releuamus, indicantes cum Langobardorum rege usque ad mensem Martium futurae quartae indictionis de pace propitiante Domino conuenisse."

Once the terms of the truce had expired, it was the exarch Callinicus who took the offensive again, attacking Parma, subject to the Lombards, and taking Agilulf's daughter captive. Agilulf then joined forces with the Avars and the Slavs, who were threatening imperial territories in Istria, against the exarch.[51] The resumption of widespread hostilities worried Gregory, who in February 601 warned the bishops of Sicily of the danger of enemy invasions, urging them to avert this risk by supplications and good works appreciated by God.[52] In 603, probably after Agilulf laid siege to Mantua, Cremona and Brexillum, the pontiff, writing to the new emperor, Phocas, complained that he had had to endure for thirty-five years the incursions of the Lombards. Here he explicitly described them as *crudeles inimicos* ("cruel enemies")[53]—elsewhere, he called them *inimici nostri* ("our enemies") or *hostes* ("foes").[54]

The new exarch Smaragdus (603–08),[55] who succeeded Callinicus, reached a truce with Agilulf that would expire after Gregory's death on 12 March, 604. In a letter shortly before his death, the pontiff thanked Theodelinda and, through her, Agilulf, for helping to reach this goal. He praised their commitment to peace and expressed his hope that it would endure into the future; in addition, he congratulated the two sovereigns on the Catholic baptism of their son, Adaloald.[56] This event probably nourished Gregory's hopes that the Lombards would come nearer to Catholicism. In order to smooth the way for them in this direction, he reassured the queen about the crucial point in the controversy between the Roman Church and some churches in northern Italy that were against the condemnation of the *Three Chapters* by Justinian (553), to which latter party Theodelinda belonged.[57] This disagreement on dogma had political implications: in fact, the churches that rejected the imperial condemnation

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51 *Reg.* 10.15 to Maximus, bishop of Salona (CCSL 140A:842): "Et quidem de Sclauorum gente, quae uobis ualde imminet, ... affligor in his quae iam in uobis patior; conturbor, quia per Histriae aditum iam ad Italiam intrare coeperunt."

52 *Reg.* 11.31 (CCSL 140A:919–20).

53 *Reg.* 13.39 (CCSL 140A:1042–43, esp. ll. 25–30).

54 See e.g. *Reg.* 11.31 (February 601) (CCSL 140A:919–20) ll. 3–4 (*inimicos nostros*), ll. 21–22 (*saeuientis inimici ... gladius*), and l. 28 (*ab hoste*).

55 See "Smaragdus 2," *PLRE* 3B:1165–66.

56 *Reg.* 14.12 (CCSL 140A:1082–83).

57 For discussions on dogma in the letters to Theodelinda, see *Reg.* 4.4 (CCSL 140:220–21); 4.33 (CCSL 140:252–53) (=5.52 [CCSL 140:346–47]); 14.12 (CCSL 140A:1083). On the controversy over the *Three Chapters* see Markus, *Gregory*, pp. 125–42.

of the *Three Chapters*, and in particular those in the diocese of Aquileia, used their submission to the Lombards to claim their independence both from the Roman Church and the imperial government. Theodelinda's entry to communion with Rome, Gregory hoped, would bring a *rapprochement* between the Lombard rulers and the Roman Church and a significant consequence of this would be the loss of Lombard cover for the northern Italian dissenters, thereby weakening their resistance and facilitating a resolution of the schism. This goal was actually reached only after Gregory's death, at the Synod of Pavia in 698 under the Lombard king, Cunicpert.[58]

The unity of the Church and the end of internal divisions was a recurring topic in the correspondence between Gregory and Theodelinda, but also between the pope and Constantius, bishop of Milan (592–600). With his friend, Gregory corresponded frequently in regard to the supporters of the *Three Chapters* and the queen.[59] The delicate role of interlocutor and mediator that the queen assumed after her marriage to Agilulf (590) undoubtedly opened avenues of conciliation with the Lombards that the pontiff did not fail to exploit.

However, as we can infer from the language often used by Gregory in reference to the Lombards, a certain mistrust towards them persisted. This feeling was certainly stronger in his initial years as pontiff and, although it subsequently abated, it would never disappear altogether.[60] Gregory's mistrust reveals the anxiety which filled his relationships with the invaders and the imperial administration in Italy. Sometimes periods of military truce seemed to mitigate this feeling of anxiety, other times it was intensified by a recrudescence of hostilities. An aggravating factor was the fact that the hostilities came from more than one front, relatively autonomous one from the other, as with the armistice of 598,[61] when the Lombard king and the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento acted quite separately.[62]

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[58] See Ottorino Bertolini, "Riflessi politici delle controversie religiose con Bisanzio nelle vicende del secolo VII in Italia," in *Caratteri del secolo VII in Occidente*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 5/2 (Spoleto, 1958), pp. 733–89, at 746–49 and 786–89 on the Synod of Pavia; Azzara, *L'ideologia*, pp. 106–07.

[59] See *Reg.* 4.2 (CCSL 140:218); 4.3 (CCSL 140:219–20); 4.37 (CCSL 140:257–58); 9.187 (CCSL 140A:743).

[60] See *Reg.* 9.44 (October 598) (CCSL 140A:602): "de eisdem hostibus de quibus suspecti nunc usque fuimus adhuc et in posterum suspecti sumus"; see also *Reg.* 8.2 (CCSL 140A:516 ll. 49–50) and 9.206 (CCSL 140A:765).

[61] See *Reg.* 9.44 (CCSL 140A:602–03) (see above, n. 47).

[62] Gregory had also contacts with Arechis (or Arogis) from Benevento: see *Reg.* 9.125 and 127 (CCSL 140A:676 and 677).

The texts we have considered highlight the multi-sided relationship that Gregory had with the Lombards. It was a relationship which combined the reservations of the Roman towards the "barbarians" with the pain of the oppressed under an invader's yoke; but it also combined the subtlety of the politician, as he dealt with the powerful of his times, with the pastoral solicitude of the bishop focused on protecting his flock in every way. The same pastoral solicitude can be seen in Gregory's correspondence with the Franks and Anglo-Saxons.

Gregory and the Franks[63]

The Franks lived in the Lower Rhine and in northern Gaul. Under King Clovis (481/82–511) they expanded their realm to include most of southern Gaul. They also became the first barbarian people to convert officially to Catholic Christianity. Upon the death of a Frankish ruler, the kingdom and the royal title were typically divided among all his male heirs. As a result, there were frequently several Frankish kings, with seats of power located in different centres across Gaul. The main divisions were between Neustria in the north-west, Austrasia in the north-east, Aquitaine in the south-west and Burgundy in the centre-east of the kingdom. Modern historians use the term "Merovingian" to describe the dynasty descended from Clovis.[64]

Gregory's correspondence with the Franks began in the year following the Lombard siege of Rome (593–94).[65] The pope's relationship with the Frankish political and Church leaders was based on different foundations from the one with the Lombards and the Anglo-Saxons, because the Franks had mostly been Catholic for almost a century. Hence Gregory

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[63] On the relationships between Gregory and figures of the Gallic and Frankish world, see Dudden, *Gregory*, 2:43–98, esp. pp. 55–98; Richards, *Consul of God*, pp. 212–16; J. Michael Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 114–18; Luce Pietri, "Grégoire le grand et la Gaule: le projet pour la réforme de l'Église Gauloise," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, 1:109–28; Markus, *Gregory*, pp. 168–77; Martyn, *Letters*, 1:51–58; Müller, *Führung*, pp. 329–31 and 366–79. On the partition of power amongst the Merovingians after the death of Childebert II and the political implications of their correspondence with Gregory, see Ian Wood, "Augustine and Gaul," in *St. Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud, 1999), pp. 68–82.

[64] On the Merovingian Franks, see Ian N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London, 1994).

[65] A hint at the turbulences caused by the Lombards is found in *Reg.* 5.60 to Childebert (August 595) (CCSL 140:362): "Quae etiam dudum scriberem, si uoluntatem meam occupationes innumerae minime praepedissent."

acknowledged their pre-eminence above other German peoples, as he stated in a letter of 595 to King Childebert II (575–96).[66] For this reason, Gregory repeatedly appealed to the Frankish sovereigns' responsibility to protect Catholicism at various levels: promoting its taking root among their subjects; offering logistical support to the missionaries sent from Rome to Britain; helping the activity of the presbyter Candidus, sent in 595 to administer the possessions of the Roman Church in Gaul (*patrimonium sancti Petri*).[67]

Among the sovereigns who corresponded with Gregory, Childebert II was the recipient of only two letters, since he died in 596. A longer period (595–602) was covered by Gregory's correspondence with Theoderic II (596–613) and Theodebert II (596–612), Childebert's sons and successors in the kingdoms of Burgundy and Austrasia, and with Brunhild, their grandmother and regent in the government (*c.*567–613), and finally with their rival Chlothar II, king of Neustria (584–629).[68]

The problems confronted in the correspondence with the sovereigns are present in large part also in the letters that the pontiff sent to Church leaders of the Frankish kingdom. Among these, Gregory assigned a prominent role to Bishop Virgilius of Arles (580–610), whom he appointed as his vicar, allowing him to use the *pallium* and entrusting the supervision

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[66] *Reg.* 6.6 (CCSL 140:73–74): "Esse autem regem, quia sunt et alii, non mirum est, sed esse catholicum, quod alii non merentur, hoc satis est." (trans. Martyn, *Letters*, 2:405).

[67] Recommendations in favour of Candidus can be found in the following letters sent to sovereigns and members of the clergy: *Reg.* 6.5 (CCSL 140:373); 6.6 (CCSL 140:374); 6.51 (CCSL 140:424); 6.52 (CCSL 140:425); 6.54 (CCSL 140:427); 6.55 (CCSL 140:428); 6.56 (CCSL 140:429); 6.59 (CCSL 140:432); 6.60 (CCSL 140:433); 11.44 (CCSL 140A:942). On the *patrimonium Petri* in general, see Girolamo Arnaldi, "Patrimonio di s. Pietro," in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, pp. 259–63.

[68] The first epistle that deals with Frankish issues is *Reg.* 5.31 (April 595) (CCSL 140:298–9); the last one is *Reg.* 13.11 (November 602) (CCSL 140A:1009–11). Wood, "Augustine," p. 76, argues that, beyond the known letters, there were others sent to Gregory by the Merovingian sovereigns, now lost. For the approximate use of the geographical designations of *Gallia* (the more "Roman" part of the Frankish kingdom, in the South) and *Germania* (the northernmost region) in the Gregorian epistolary, see Robert A. Markus, "The Chronology of the Gregorian Mission to England: Bede's Narrative and Gregory's Correspondence," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 14 (1963), 16–30, at 27; repr. in idem, *From Augustine to Gregory the Great. History and Christianity in Late Antiquity* (London, 1983), X; Richards, *Consul of God*, p. 249. On the Merovingian sovereigns, see "Brunichildis," *PLRE* 3A:248–51; "Childebertus II," *PLRE* 3A:287–91; "Chlotarius II," *PLRE* 3A:299–301; "Theodebertus II," *PLRE* 3B:1231–32; "Theodericus, 4 = Theoderic II," *PLRE* 3B:1237–39; Cacciari, "Brunichilda" and "Childeberto," in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, pp. 45–46 and p. 58; Lunardini, "Teodeberto II d'Austrasia" and "Teoderico II di Burgundia," ibid., p. 345 and pp. 346–47.

of the Frankish Church to him, in defence of orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Gregory urged the other bishops in Gaul to obey Virgilius.[69]

It seems likely that this task was entrusted to Virgilius because Gregory wanted to watch over the Frankish Church more directly. The main aim was to fight forms of corruption caused by patronage links between the political and ecclesiastical elites, which Gregory denounced both in his letters to the bishops and in those to the sovereigns.[70] We can infer from these letters how widespread the episcopal ordination of lay persons was, lacking in pastoral skills, throughout the Frankish kingdom. There were also many cases of venality of the sacred order, that Gregory called "simony". Its origins lay in abuse of the Merovingian kings' right to approve episcopal appointments, which led to such consequences: it was always a temptation for the king to sell a bishopric to the highest seller, regardless of his spiritual qualifications.[71]

The pontiff was also aware of cases of simony in other churches: for example, in the ordination of Maximus, bishop of Salona in Dalmatia,[72] and of other clergy in Epirus, in Alexandria and in other eastern dioceses.[73] In the Frankish Church, however, this phenomenon was probably severest, if we consider that in 599 Gregory insisted that a Frankish synod be summoned to condemn simony and the episcopal ordination of lay people. A synodical decree condemning both, he thought, would be an

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[69] See *Reg.* 5.58 to Virgilius of Arles (August 595) (CCSL 140:354–55) and 5.59 to the Gallic bishops (especially CCSL 140:358). On the *pallium* in general and also with reference to Gregory's letters, see John Albert Eidenschink, *The Election of Bishops in the Letters of Gregory the Great with an Appendix on the Pallium*, Canon Law Studies 215 (Washington DC, 1945), pp. 101–43.

[70] See *Reg.* 5.58 to Virgilius of Arles (CCSL 140:355–56); 5.59 to the Gallic bishops (CCSL 140:359–60); 5.60, to Childebert (CCSL 140:361–2); three *Reg.* to Brunhild: 8.4 (CCSL 140A:520), 9.214 (CCSL 140A:772–74) and 11.49 (CCSL 140A:948); 9.216 to Theoderic and Theodebert (CCSL 140A:777–78); 9.219 to some bishops in Gaul (CCSL 140A:783–88); 9.220 and 11.42, to Bishop Aregius of Gap (CCSL 140A:792; CCSL 140A:939); 11.38 to Virgilius of Arles (CCSL 140A:932–33); 11.40 to Aetherius, bishop of Lyon (CCSL 140A:936–37); 11.47 to Theoderic (CCSL 140A:945); 11.50 to Theodebert (CCSL 140A:949–50); 11.51 to Chlothar (CCSL 140A:951).

[71] See Eidenschink, *The Election*, pp. 58–59. For the expression "the Simoniac heresy", see *Reg.* 4.13 (CCSL 140:231 ll. 22–23); 5.16 (CCSL 140:283 l. 39); 5.58 (CCSL 140:356 l. 45).

[72] See *Reg.* 6.3 and 6.25 to Maximus of Salona (CCSL 140:371; CCSL 140:395); 6.26 to members of the clergy and the aristocracy of Salona (CCSL 140:397–98); 9.156 to Marinianus of Ravenna on the case of Maximus (CCSL 140A:713–14).

[73] See *Reg.* 6.7 to bishops of the Epirus (CCSL 140:376); 9.136 to Anastasius of Antioch (CCSL 140A:687); 13.42 to Eulogius of Alexandria (CCSL 140A:1046–47).

efficient deterrent against all those who might be tempted towards these practices.[74]

Letters to two successive abbots of Lerins refer to other issues affecting Frankish monastic life.[75] Sometimes the pontiff addressed social and economic problems, above all those connected to the administration of the *patrimonium sancti Petri*,[76] and to the problem of Christian slaves owned by Jews. He argued against this practice in a letter of 597 to Candidus, whom he urged to invest the resources necessary to free these slaves,[77] and in letters written in 599 to Brunhild, Theoderic, and Theodebert.[78]

Among Gregory's letters to the Frankish Church can also be found a record of his debate with Serenus, bishop of Marseille, about sacred images.[79] In 599, Gregory reproached Serenus for promoting the destruction of images of saints in churches under his control. Serenus intended to repress the adoration of their images because, in his opinion, there was the risk of idolatry, that is, the worship of things instead of the cult of God in spirit. Gregory's criticism of this attitude reveals a different insight into the role of images in Christian worship. Gregory warned him:[80]

> Your Fraternity should have preserved them [the images in the churches] and should have prohibited the people from their adoration, so that both the illiterate might have a way of acquiring some knowledge of history, and the people would not be sinning at all in their adoration of a picture.

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[74] *Reg.* 11.38 to Virgilius of Arles (CCSL 140A:933): "ut synodus ad eradendam ipsam haeresim congregari possit, insiste, quatenus cum dilectionis uestrae mercede melius ab omnibus caueatur, quod auctore Deo omnium fuerit constitutione damnatum."

[75] *Reg.* 6.57 to the abbot Stephanus (CCSL 140:430) and 11.9 to the abbot Conon (CCSL 140A:871–72).

[76] See above, n. 67.

[77] *Reg.* 7.21 (CCSL 140:472).

[78] *Reg.* 9.214 and 216 (CCSL 140A:774–75 and 779). On the Christian slaves of Jews, see Amnon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit, 1987), pp. 82–85 and the references to the relevant laws (in particular nr. 11, pp. 144–51).

[79] On the debate with Serenus and its historical context, see Robert A. Markus, "The Cult of Icons in Sixth-Century Gaul," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 29 (1978), 151–57, repr. in idem, *From Augustine*, XII; Luce Pietri, "Serenus de Marseille et Grégoire le grand: une première querelle des images," in *Historiam perscrutari. Miscellanea di studi offerti al prof. Ottorino Pasquato*, ed. Mario Maritano (Rome, 2002), pp. 327–41, esp. p. 332 and pp. 339–41.

[80] *Reg.* 9.209 (July 599) (CCSL 140A:768): "Tua ergo fraternitas et illa seruare et ab eorum adoratu populum prohibere debuit, quatenus et litterarum nescii haberent, unde scientiam historiae colligerent, et populus in picturae adoratione minime peccaret" (trans. Martyn, *Letters*, 2:674).

Gregory insisted on the purely didactic purpose of images for the formation of the illiterate, writing again to Serenus a year later. The pontiff agreed with him in condemning the worship of images, but disagreed with him on their destruction, which deprived the illiterate of an accessible tool for learning more about the *Lives* of the saints.[81]

We should wonder how relevant Gregory's argument was to the issue of the adoration of images in Marseille. Serenus, in fact, seems to have attacked the *sanctorum imagines*,[82] static portraits of the saints or "icons", that had become objects of adoration across the Mediterranean world during the 6th century.[83] Yet it appears that, although he mentioned them in his correspondence with Serenus, Gregory was not really defending the *sanctorum imagines* but rather trying to defend the *sanctorum historiae*,[84] pictorial scenes depicting episodes from the *Lives* of the saints, which Gregory viewed as narrating for the illiterate the same educational message as the written texts they drew on. Of course, it is possible that Serenus objected to both kinds of images. Either way, it is clear that the Frankish Church was witnessing an expansion of role of images in Christian worship, as was occurring elsewhere in the Mediterranean world during this period.

Yet if Gregory was indulgent towards expressions of popular devotion to sacred images, he was intolerant towards rites of pagan origin that persisted among Christians peoples. In a letter written in 597, he invited Queen Brunhild to repress with coercive measures all remaining idolatrous cults, so that those Catholic subjects who still practised non-Christian rites be forced to abstain from them.[85] In the same letter, Gregory thanked the

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[81] *Reg.* 11.10 (October 600) (CCSL 140A:874): "Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturae historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere. Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cernentibus, quia in ipsa ignorantes uident quod sequi debeant, in ipsa legunt qui litteras nesciunt." (trans. Martyn, *Letters*, 3:745).

[82] *Reg.* 11.10 (CCSL 140A:873 l. 16).

[83] See above all Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Period before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954), 85–150, esp. 132; and more recently, Matthew Dal Santo, "Text, Image and the 'Visionary Body' in Early Byzantine Hagiography: Incubation and the Rise of the Christian Image Cult," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4 (2011), 30–54.

[84] *Reg.* 11.10 (CCSL 140A:874 ll. 31–32). Gregory insists on the concept of pictorial *historia* and of *uisio rei gestae* (ibid., p. 875, ll. 49, 55 and 59–62): "Sed hoc sollicite fraternitas tua admoneat ut ex uisione rei gestae ardorem compunctionis percipiant et in adoratione solius omnipotentis sanctae Trinitatis humiliter prosternantur." See further Celia Chazelle, "Pictures, books and the illiterate: Gregory I's letters to Serenus of Marseilles," *Word and Image* 6 (1990), 13–53, esp. 141 and 150.

[85] *Reg.* 8.4 (CCSL 140A:521): the cults here mentioned recall those described in *Dial.* 3.28 (SC 260:374) with regards to the pagan Lombards.

queen for her support for Augustine, sent to preach the gospel among the Anglo-Saxons.[86]

In fact, the Frankish Church also played an important role in Gregory's mission to the Anglo-Saxons. From 596, the pontiff often recommended his missionaries to the sovereigns and bishops in Gaul, in order to facilitate their journey and at the same time to stimulate in the Frankish Church a more active cooperation with an enterprise that he could only follow from a distance.[87] According to Ian Wood, Brunhild and later Chlothar welcomed this request from the pontiff with zeal because they realized that their involvement in the mission in Britain could benefit both of them in their competition for political hegemony within the Merovingian kingdom.[88] In any case, in letters written between 599 and 601, Gregory thanked the sovereigns and also the bishops who welcomed and supported his monks on their way to Britain, and he hoped for the same support for those whom he sent to help these pioneers in the work of evangelizing the Anglo-Saxons.[89]

Gregory and the Anglo-Saxons[90]

We know from two letters of July 596 to Queen Brunhild and to the princes Theoderic and Theodebert that Gregory sent from his monastery on the

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[86] *Reg.* 8.4 (CCSL 140A:520).

[87] Recommendations in favour of Augustine can be found in *Reg.* 6.51 (CCSL 140:424); 6.52 (CCSL 140:425); 6.54 (CCSL 140:427); 6.55 (CCSL 140:428); 6.59 (CCSL 140:432); 6.60 (CCSL 140:433).

[88] See Wood, "Augustine," pp. 76–80.

[89] The epistles of thanks and recommendations for the second group of missionaries are *Reg.* 9.223 (CCSL 140A:725); 11.40 (CCSL 140A:937); 11.34 (CCSL 140A:922–23); 11.38 (CCSL 140A:934); 11.40 (CCSL 140A:937); 11.41 (CCSL 140A:938); 11.42 (CCSL 140A:939–40); 11.45 (CCSL 140A:942); 11.47 (CCSL 140A:946); 11.48 (CCSL 140A:946–47); 11.50 (CCSL 140A:950); 11.51 (CCSL 140A:951).

[90] For Gregory's relationships with the Anglo-Saxons, see Dudden, *Gregory*, 2:99–147; Suso Brechter, *Die Quellen zur Angelsachsenmission Gregors des Großen* (Münster, 1941); Richards, *Consul of God*, pp. 238–50; Georg Jenal, "Gregor der Große und die Anfänge der Angelsachsenmission (596–604)," in *Angli e Sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 32, 2 vols (Spoleto, 1986), 2:793–849; Henry Chadwick, "Gregory the Great and the Mission to the Anglo-Saxons," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, 1:199–212; Wood, "The Mission," pp. 1–17; Azzara, *L'ideologia*, pp. 90–96; Richard Gameson, "Augustine of Canterbury: Context and Achievement," in *St. Augustine and the Conversion of England*, pp. 1–40; Jean Chélini, "La mission d'Augustin de Cantorbéry dans la vision missionaire de saint Grégoire le grand," and Adalbert de Vogüé, "Les vues de Grégoire le grand sur l'action missionaire en Angleterre," in *L'Église et la Mission au VIe siècle. La mission d'Augustin de Cantorbéry et les Églises de Gaule sous l'impulsion de Grégoire le grand*, Actes du Colloque d'Arles de 1998, ed. Christophe De Dreuille (Paris, 2000), pp. 41–53 and pp. 55–64 respectively; Martyn, *Letters*, 1:58–72.

Caelian Hill a group of monks with their prior, Augustine, to evangelize the Anglo-Saxons.[91] During their journey through the Frankish kingdom, the missionaries heard frightful stories about the Anglo-Saxons, so they asked Augustine to go back to Rome in order to obtain from the pope the revocation of their mandate.[92] Gregory, instead, firm in his desire to realize a well-pondered missionary plan, sent Augustine back with two letters of recommendation that would ensure for him good will and logistical support from bishops and other authorities in Gaul.[93] In one of these letters, sent to Theoderic and Theodebert, Gregory expressed the wish that some presbyters who commanded the language spoken in Britain might accompany the Latin-speaking monks and act as interpreters between the missionaries and the Anglo-Saxons.[94]

Ethnically German, the Anglo-Saxons occupied a large part of lowland Britain between the 5th century and the first half of the 6th century, while the indigenous Romanised Celtic population found refuge in the mountainous west of the island. In this way, Britain found itself divided between a Celtic area of Roman and Christian traditions and an Anglo-Saxon area, mostly pagan. Power in the latter was divided among many different kings, with one (called *Bretwalda*) sometimes occupying a more dominant position over the others. Among these dominant kings may have been Æthelbert of Kent, who had a crucial role in the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons.

The reasons why Gregory committed himself to this enterprise can only be hypothesized. The only explicit clue is in the letters of 596 (mentioned above) to the Frankish sovereigns.[95] It seems that it was the Anglo-Saxons

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[91] See *Reg.* 6.51 and 60 (see also below, n. 95).

[92] See *Reg.* 6.53 to the missionaries, encouraged to continue their journey (CCSL 140A:426).

[93] See *Reg.* 9.223 to Syagrus, bishop of Autun (CCSL 140A:795): "in praedicationis opere, quam diu cogitans Anglorum genti per Augustinum quondam monasterii mei praepositum, nunc fratrem et coepiscopum nostrum, impendere studui, ita sollicitum ac deuotum adiutoremque in omnibus te, ut oportuit, fuisse cognouimus." The letters in support of the missionaries have been listed above, n. 87 and n. 89.

[94] *Reg.* 6.51 (CCSL 140:424): "Quibus [scil. Augustino et aliis seruis Dei] etiam iniunximus ut aliquos secum e uicino debeant presbyteros ducere, cum quibus eorum possint mentes agnoscere et uoluntates admonitione sua, quantum Deus donauerit, adiuuare." On the presence of members of the Frankish clergy alongside the Roman missionaries, see Wood, "Augustine," pp. 77 and 79.

[95] *Reg.* 6.51 to Theoderic and Theodebert, July 596 (CCSL 140:424): "Atque ideo peruenit ad nos Anglorum gentem ad fidem Christianam Deo miserante desideranter uelle conuerti sed sacerdotes e uicino neglegere et desideria eorum cessare sua adhortatione succendere. Ob hoc igitur Augustinum... cum aliis seruis Dei illic praeuidimus dirigendum"; *Reg.* 6.60

themselves who expressed the need to know more about Christianity. Theirs was a need that apparently had been overlooked by nearby priests (*sacerdotes e uicino*), perhaps identifiable with bishops from the westernmost parts of Britain or from Merovingian Gaul, hence subjects of the Franks.

Even in the lands conquered by the pagan Anglo-Saxons, ancient Roman-Celtic Christian shrines still existed. Probably one of these was the church of St. Martin in Canterbury, seat of Æthelbert: it was the place of worship of the King's wife, Bertha, of Frankish origins and Catholic faith, and of her adviser, the Frankish priest Liudhard. Also the queen's faith may have had an impact on Æthelbert's approach towards Christianity. It could also have been that the Anglo-Saxon king preferred to express his interest in Christianity to the bishop of Rome rather than to Frankish bishops, because the involvement of the latter in the religious matters of his kingdom could have led to political interference by the Merovingian sovereigns. A missionary initiative coming from Rome may have seemed less "dangerous" to Æthelbert, because it involved fewer consequences at the political level.[96]

The Roman monks arrived in Britain in the spring of 597 armed only with the cross and the gospel.[97] Æthelbert allowed them freedom of preaching and the use of old churches, like that of St. Martin mentioned above. The first fruits of the missionary activity were announced in a letter of July 598, addressed by Gregory to Eulogius of Alexandria: "[It] was reported that our brother and fellow-bishop baptized more than 10,000 English".[98]

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to Brunhild, July 596 (CCSL 140:433): "indicamus ad nos peruenisse Anglorum gentem Deo annuente uelle fieri Christianam, sed sacerdotes qui in uicino sunt pastoralem erga eos sollicitudinem non habere". On the identification of *sacerdotes e uicino* see Markus, *Gregory*, p. 181, n. 76; Wood, "The Mission," p. 8; Gameson, "Augustine," p. 7; Martyn, *Letters*, 1:55.

[96] On the use of the church of St. Martin, see Bede, *HE* 1.26.1 (eds André Crépin, Michael Lapidge, Pierre Monat and Philippe Robin, SC 489 [Paris, 2005], p. 204). On the sovereigns, see "Aethelbert," *PLRE* 3A:20 and on Bertha see Wood, "Augustine," pp. 70–74. On the role of Bertha and Liudhard in the process of Christianization and on the attitudes of Æthelbert, see Arnold Angenendt, "The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons Considered against the Background of the Early Medieval Mission," in *Angli e Sassoni*, pp. 779–81; Markus, *Gregory*, pp. 178–79; Gameson, "Augustine," pp. 16–18.

[97] See Bede, *HE* 1.25.2 (SC 489:202.5–10) and, on the beginnings of the mission, the whole of chapter 25 (SC 489:198–204).

[98] *Reg.* 8.29 (CCSL 140A:551): "plus quam decem milia Angli ab eodem nuntiati sunt fratre et coepiscopo nostro baptizati" (trans. Martyn, *Letters*, 2:524 and n. 116 on the other sources that refer to this episode).

From the enthusiastic account made by the bishop of Rome to his Egyptian colleague it appears that Augustine, appointed as abbot by the pope for the purposes of the mission,[99] had subsequently been consecrated bishop in Frankish territory, either *en route* or during a return visit to Gaul after it appeared that the English mission was bearing fruit.[100] For soon after Augustine's arrival in Britain, Gregory reports, many among the Anglo-Saxons converted, thanks to preaching skills of the Roman monks and the miracles they performed. 10,000 converts seem to have been baptized on the missionaries' first Christmas day in Britain. The historical accuracy of this date and of the number of converts is less relevant than their symbolic value, which points to a multitude of people born again spiritually on the very day which celebrates the birth of Christ, whose gospel they accepted. Moreover, by using the number 10,000—whose components, 10 and 1000, symbolize perfection and totality[101]—Gregory seems to suggest the idea that the growth of the Church in Britain was part of a process of universal growth among the community of the faithful, just as the Church in Alexandria was also increasing through Eulogius's actions to combat heresy. This process of growth, Gregory believed, would reach its perfection at the end of time, after the conversion of all peoples even at the furthest reaches of the earth.

From the letter to Eulogius, we can conclude that it was precisely Gregory's concern for universal salvation that convinced him to send preachers to a people settled *in mundi angulo*,[102] that is, in one of the territories located, according to the parameters of Roman imperial geography, at the furthest reaches of the earth.

A similar motivation can be inferred from the well-known legend handed down more than a century later by Bede, who called Gregory the

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[99] See *Reg.* 6.53 (CCSL 140:426) to the missionary monks, July 596: "Remeanti autem Augustino praeposito uestro, quem et abbatem uobis constituimus, in omnibus humiliter oboedite": see also Bede, *HE* 1.23.2 (SC 489:194 ll. 9–11).

[100] Otherwise, as a monk, Augustine would not have been able to baptize the future converts and hence to start the foundation of a church. According to Bede, *HE* 1.27.1 (SC 489:206–08), Augustine was consecrated bishop by Aetherius of Arles, but the author seems to confuse Aetherius, actually the bishop of Lyon, and Virgilius of Arles (see SC 489:197, n. 3 and SC 489:208, n. 1); on this issue see also Markus, "The Chronology," pp. 25–29; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p. 115; Richards, *Consul of God*, pp. 248–50; Martyn, *Letters*, 1:55; Müller, *Führung*, p. 332.

[101] On the symbolic values of 10, 1000 and 10,000 with reference to Gregorian *loci*, see Heinz Meyer and Rudolf Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen* (Munich, 1987), cols 591–615; 848–56; 879–82.

[102] *Reg.* 8.29 (CCSL 140A:551 l. 22).

"apostle" of the Anglo-Saxons.[103] Sometime before becoming pope, Gregory met among the multi-ethnic crowd in the Roman forum a small group of Anglo-Saxon boys with an "angelic" look, who were being sold as slaves. When he asked which people they belonged to, what their place of origin was and the name of their king, he heard that they were called *Angli*, their region *Deiri* and their king *Aelle*. Inspired by the similarity between these names and some words of his own Latin language, Gregory felt that it was urgent to evangelize the *Angli*, so that they might become coheirs of the angels (*angeli*), learn to sing the Alleluia (*A(e)lle[luia]*), and escape God's wrath (*De-ir[a De]i*). He remembered this wish later and tried to carry it out during his pontificate.[104]

Did this legend rely on a historical basis? It is hard to give a definitive answer, but the *Registrum* offers an interesting clue. In a letter of September 595, the pontiff urged Candidus, administrator of Church property in Gaul, to use some of the land revenues to buy some Anglo-Saxon pagan boys and bring them into monasteries, so that "they may progress in the service of God".[105] His concern was to redeem these young boys, usually traded as slaves between Gaul and Britain, and introduce them to monastic life.

Both the sources quoted, Bede and the letter to Candidus, confirm the pontiff's wish to call as many souls as possible to salvation in Christ, a wish that recurs in his other writings. This should not necessarily be interpreted as a desire to extend to Britain and north-western Europe Rome's influence as a centre of ecclesiastical rather than political power; even if

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[103] Bede, *HE* 2.1.1 (SC 489:270): "[Gregorium] quia nostram, id est Anglorum, gentem de potestate Satanae ad fidem Christi sua industria conuertit,... recte nostrum appellare possumus et debemus apostolum."

[104] See Bede, *HE* 2.1.11 (SC 489:284–86) and Anon. Whitby, *Vita Greg.* 9 (= *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby*, ed. Bertram Colgrave [Cambridge, 1985], p. 90).

[105] *Reg.* 6.10 (CCSL 140:378–79): "Pergens auxiliante Domino Deo nostro Iesu Christo ad patrimonium quod est in Galliis gubernandum uolumus ut dilectio tua ex solidis quos acceperit uestimenta pauperum uel pueros Anglos, qui sint ab annis decem et septem uel decem et octo, ut in monasteriis dati Deo proficiant, comparet, quatenus solidi Galliarum, qui in terra nostra expendi non possunt, apud locum proprium utiliter expendantur.... Sed quia pagani sunt, qui illic inueniri possunt, uolo ut cum eis presbyter transmittatur, ne quid aegritudinis contingat in uia, ut quos morituros conspexerit debeat baptizare." On this letter, see also Martyn, *Letters*, 1:54–55 and 67–68; Robert A. Markus, "Augustine and Gregory the Great," in *St. Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud, 1999), pp. 41–49, at p. 45; Charles Verlinden, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*, 2 vols (Bruges, 1955/1977), 2:95–96 with reference to the *pueri Angli*, and pp. 92–96 more generally on Gregory's attitudes towards slaves.

this is, at least in part, what actually happened. Above all, Gregory was inspired by the desire to spread the Christian message of salvation as widely as possible. His desire was the more urgent because, in his *Weltanschauung*, the end of the world was fast approaching.[106]

Yet the process of conversion was far from straightforward. In a letter of June 601, the pontiff warned King Æthelbert to prepare himself for the end of the world and the final judgement by committing himself to good deeds, such as those recommended in the first lines of the letter. Here Gregory begged the king to make every effort to propagate Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons by persecuting idolatrous cults and destroying pagan temples and, furthermore, by obeying Augustine's instructions.[107] He argued that the sovereign had a political-religious responsibility, which entailed both the sovereign's submission to the spiritual authority of the local bishop and the active use of his royal powers to repress paganism—as we have already seen in the case of Brunhild[108]—and of persuasion with words and good deeds in order to promote Christianity among his subjects. In a letter sent in the same period to Queen Bertha, Gregory invited her to exert more pressure on her husband so that the Christian faith could prevail among their people.[109] We can assume from this warning that the king had converted to the new religion, but that he had not wanted or been able to impose it on his subjects, obviously still attached to their ancient rites.

This resistance is probably why, not long afterwards, Gregory suggested another kind of missionary strategy to Abbot Mellitus, whom he sent with the presbyter Laurentius and other monks to increase the group of the missionaries. In July 601 he sent Augustine the following instructions through Mellitus:[110]

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[106] On the predominantly pastoral character of Gregory's intentions in the foundation of the Anglo-Saxon mission there is agreement between Markus, *Gregory*, p. 187; Richards, *Consul of God*, p. 250; Jenal, "Gregor der Große," pp. 827–28 and 847–49; Gameson, "Augustine," pp. 7–8. However, other scholars believe that behind the mission there were also interests of ecclesiastical politics. For an overview of those who maintain these positions, see Azzara, *L'ideologia*, pp. 91–92, n. 3.

[107] *Reg.* 11.37 (CCSL 140A:930–31).

[108] *Reg.* 8.4 (CCSL 140A:521); see above, n. 85.

[109] *Reg.* 11.35 (June 601) (CCSL 140A:924).

[110] *Reg.* 11.56 (CCSL 140:961): "... fana idolorum destrui in eadem gente minime debeant, sed ipsa, quae in eis sunt, idola destruantur. Aqua benedicta fiat, in eisdem fanis aspargatur, altaria construantur, reliquiae ponantur, quia, si fana eadem bene constructa sunt, necesse est ut a cultu daemonum in obsequio ueri Dei debeant commutari, ut, dum gens ipsa eadem fana sua non uidet destrui, de corde errorem deponat et Deum uerum cognoscens ac adorans ad loca quae consueuit familiarius concurrat." (trans. George

> [T]he shrines of idols in that land should not be destroyed, but rather... the idols that are in them should be. Let holy water be prepared and sprinkled in these shrines, and altars constructed, and relics deposited, because, as long as these shrines are well built, it is necessary that they should be transformed from the cult of demons to the service of the true God. For when the people themselves see that these shrines were not destroyed, they will lay aside the error of their heart, and knowing and adoring the true God, they will flock with more familiarity to the places to which they are accustomed.

Augustine was hence instructed to destroy only the statues of the pagan gods, so that the people could be attracted to faith in the true God without abandoning their familiar places of worship. At first sight, this advice seems to countermand that given earlier to Æthelbert. Yet this change was probably not due to a change of mind, but rather to the fact that Gregory was writing to a bishop and not to a recently converted king: the latter had to demonstrate his commitment to his new religion, whereas the former needed pastoral tact in promoting conversions among foreign people. Therefore both letters are likely to be different expressions of Gregory's deep insights about the psychology of conversion in different subjects and situations.[111]

The course of action that he recommended to the missionaries, moreover, was inspired by practical considerations (to re-use the same buildings rather than knock them down to build new ones) and biblical examples (the Israelites in Egypt, instructed by God not to sacrifice to idols anymore but only to him). Gregory's instructions thus represented an attempt to bring about a pastoral accommodation (*condescensio*) for the sake of the non-believers, in order to bring them to the faith. That is to say, Gregory sought to facilitate the penetration of Christianity by grafting it on to the local customs and places regarded as sacred by the indigenous people, with the expectation that the passage from one religion to another would

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Demacopoulos, "Gregory the Great and the Pagan Shrines in Kent", *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), 353–69, at 366–367).

[111] He states (*Reg.* 11.56, CCSL 140A:962): "Nam duris mentibus simul omnia abscidere impossibile esse non dubium est, quia is qui summum locum ascendere nititur gradibus uel passibus, non autem saltibus eleuatur." On the proposal to Mellitus and Augustine and for a comparison with this proposal and that to Æthelbert, see Ken Dowden, *European Paganism. The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London, 2000), pp. 146–48; Ian Wood, "Some Historical Re-identifications and the Christianization of Kent," in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, eds Guyda Armstrong and Ian Wood (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 27–35; Demacopoulos, "Gregory the Great and the Pagan Shrines in Kent", esp. 353–54 and 357–69.

be less traumatic and more efficient as a result. As such, Gregory's advice is an example of Christian "enculturation" in a context where paganism was entrenched.

A certain degree of pragmatism, coupled with a regard for local customs and rites, also emerges from Gregory's reply to Augustine on the question of whether to accept into the Anglo-Saxon Church some liturgical forms which were different from those of the Roman Church. The pontiff's advice was to choose those that seemed best and to adopt them into the newly-founded Church.[112] Bede gave evidence for this in reporting the so-called *Libellus responsionum* that Gregory seems to have sent to Augustine in 601 to answer questions put by the latter in his role as bishop of Canterbury. Augustine's questions dealt with various aspects of the life of the new Church entrusted to him.[113]

Augustine is mentioned in the Gregorian *Registrum* as the recipient of two letters: one regards the organization of the bishopric in the *noua Anglorum ecclesia* (*Reg.* 11.39);[114] the other, an earlier one, is a congratulatory letter for the successes of the mission and, at the same time, a warning against the risks of deriving from these successes any reason for vainglory (*Reg.* 11.36). Gregory stressed that the merit for so many conversions had to be attributed only to God and not to the miracles performed by the missionary; hence, Augustine should beware of taking pride in having performed them, and instead should only hope to receive the same salvation that he announced among the pagans.[115]

In other writings, including the *Dialogi*, Gregory insisted on the importance of humility and self-control against the temptation of self-exaltation, with particular reference to thaumaturgy.[116] This message assumes a special relevance in *Reg.* 11.36 to Augustine because in another letter sent to him (the above mentioned *Reg.* 11.39), Gregory put him at the head of the

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[112] See Bede, *HE* 1.27.6 (SC 489:210–12): "Ex singulis ergo quibusque ecclesiis quae pia, quae religiosa, quae recta sunt elige, et haec quasi in fasciculum collecta apud Anglorum mentes in consuetudinem depone."

[113] See Bede, *HE* 1.27 (SC 489:206–40). On contents, dating, textual translation and problems of authenticity of the *Libellus responsionum*, see Müller, *Führung*, pp. 341–60.

[114] *Reg.* 11.39 (June 601) (CCSL 140A:934–35, esp. p. 935 ll. 7–8).

[115] *Reg.* 11.36 (June 601) (CCSL 140A:925–29, esp. pp. 926–27 ll. 43–44 and ll. 49–51): "Restat itaque, frater carissime, ut inter ea quae operante Deo exterius facis semper te interius subtiliter iudices... Et quicquid de faciendis signis acceperis, uel accepisti, haec non tibi sed illis deputes donata, pro quorum tibi salute collata sunt." On these two letters, see Müller, *Führung*, pp. 382–84. A warning against boasting of the successes obtained in the work of conversion is contained also in the *Reg.* 9.229 to Reccared (see above, n. 10).

[116] *Dial.* 1.2.7 (SC 260:30, esp. ll. 81–82): "Perpendis, Petre, quantum in exhibendis uirtutibus humilitas ualet?"

other bishops of the new Church, so that they, subject to his authority, may learn from him "the nature of true belief and of a good life from (his) words and life".[117] If Augustine was to set an example for others, it was necessary that he be far-sighted and self-controlled, corresponding to the model of the *episcopus-speculator* illustrated by the pontiff in a paradigmatic way in *Homiliae in Hiezechielem*, which he addressed around eight years earlier to an audience which probably included bishops.[118]

In his first letter to Augustine (*Reg.* 11.36), Gregory focused not only on the importance of humility and self-control, but also set this warning in the context of a broader meditation on the history of salvation, that he opened and closed with the cry of exultation of the angels at the birth of Christ, quoted at the beginning and at the end of the letter: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke 2:14).[119] With this *ouverture* interwoven with gospel and Pauline echoes, Gregory highlighted a link between the Christianization of Britain and the first evangelization carried out by Christ and the apostles. He saw the mission promoted by himself and carried out by Augustine as part of the history of salvation. He also emphatically attributed the mission's "authorship" to the Lord, who shows his power by realizing his great works through preachers who are weak (*infirmi*) and unlearned (*sine litteris*).[120] We should not infer from these last words that the monks sent from Rome were illiterate. We should instead grasp the author's intention to draw attention to God's logic, which turns upside-down the human hierarchies of power, as shown in Paul's speech to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:26–27), at which Gregory hinted. This emerges also in an *excursus* on the mission in Britain, included in the *Moralia in Iob*, where the author celebrates the irresistible power of God that, revealing itself in history and in nature, is able to lead back to itself the most impenetrable extremities of the earth.[121]

Conclusion

A comparative evaluation of the texts here examined allows us to demons trate how Gregory, in his relationships with the Lombards, Visigoths,

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[117] *Reg.* 11.39, trans. Martyn, *Letters*, 3:786 (CCSL 140A:935, esp. ll. 31–32): "ex lingua et uita ... et recte credendi et bene uiuendi formam".

[118] *HEz.* 1.11.7 (CCSL 142:172).

[119] *Reg.* 11.36 (CCSL 140A:925 l. 2 and 929 l. 114).

[120] *Reg.* 11.36 (CCSL 140A:925.17–20).

[121] *Mor.* 27.11.21 (CCSL 143B:1346); on this passage see Dudden, *Gregory*, 2:147; Markus, *Gregory*, p. 186, esp. n. 99.

Franks and Anglo-Saxons, did not pursue an ideological programme aimed at assimilating non-Roman peoples into the political-religious sphere of the Roman-Byzantine Empire; his programme was rather pastoral and his horizon universal. In carrying out this programme and in his search for collaborators, the pontiff turned to the high clergy of the Germanic kingdoms and he chose his vicars from among its ranks; he also turned to the sovereigns, whose power he did not challenge, even as he remained faithful to the emperor at Constantinople. Hence, he acted with respect for the hierarchies while, at the same time, meting out his interventions according to the type of interlocutor and the particular context. He also showed a certain sensibility in respecting and valuing local peculiarities, as long as they were useful to his general objective: the promotion of that Christian faith that he defined as "the right faith" (*fides recta*).[122] Gregory hoped and believed that this faith, which he acknowledged as having been formulated in the four ecumenical councils,[123] was destined to spread amongst all peoples before the end of ages was fulfilled.

[122] E.g. *Reg.* 1.17 (CCSL 140:17 l. 10); 9.229 (CCSL 140A:806 l. 7); 11.35 (CCSL 140A:924 l. 20).

[123] E.g. *Reg.* 4.33 to Theodelinda (CCSL 140:253).

CHAPTER THREE

GREGORY THE GREAT, THE EMPIRE AND THE EMPEROR

Matthew Dal Santo

Gregory the Great (*c.*540–604) left behind no treatise dedicated to "secular" authority and his views on the nature and origins of imperial power, the office of the emperor and the wider purpose of the Roman Empire in history, have to be distilled from diverse references to imperial authority found above all in his collected correspondence.[1] Gregory's lifetime spanned the reigns of five emperors: Justinian (527–65), his nephew Justin II (565–78), Tiberius II (578–82), Maurice (582–602) and Phocas (602–10). Gregory always approached the imperial office, whoever its occupant, with deference, and never conceived of a future for the Roman Church separate from the political and spiritual community of the Roman Empire, even if the latter was, in his day, ruled from Constantinople. Gregory knew well that, as individuals, emperors could err in their judgements and policies. When this occurred, he protested with all the vigour that his belief in the supremacy of God's interests over every human concern could inspire. This act of protest was, for Gregory, part of the duty he owed as a minister of God to the divinely appointed ruler of what was for him God's "holy commonwealth" (*sancta res publica*), and for us the (East) Roman, or Byzantine, Empire. It is therefore mistaken to see in Gregory's pontificate, as some have done, an anticipation of the mental or physical boundaries of later medieval western "Christendom", a political community based above all on the universal use of Latin and the acknowledgement of the supreme spiritual authority of the bishop of Rome ("Pope").[2]

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[1] Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 84. Cf. Carole Straw, "Gregory's Politics: Theory and Practice," in *Gregorio magno e il suo tempo: XIX incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana in collaborazione con l'École Française de Rome, Roma, 9–12 maggio 1990*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 33–34, 2 vols (Rome, 1991), 1:47–63; David Hipshon, "Gregory the Great's Political Thought," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53 (2002), 439–53.

[2] Robert A. Markus, "Gregory the Great's Europe," in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 31 (London, 1981), pp. 21–36, repr. in idem, *From Augustine to Gregory the Great: History and Christianity in Late Antiquity* (London, 1983), XV; and idem, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 83–96.

We get a glimpse of the important role the emperor played in Gregory's thought in a letter he wrote to Emperor Maurice in October 596:[3]

> Almighty God who has made Your Majesty the guardian of the peace of our Church, preserves you with the very faith which you preserve in the unity of the priesthood, and when you subject your heart humbly beneath the yoke of heavenly piety, through heavenly grace it is brought about that you tread on your enemies with the foot of fortitude.

Set over the Christian community as the guardian of its peace, the emperor's authority flowed directly from God for the protection of his priestly ministers, the bishops. Many of Gregory's letters to the emperor, the empress and other members of the imperial court at Constantinople confirm his view that the emperor—and, indeed, the Christian empire that he ruled—played an indispensable part in the "economy"—structure or dispensation—that God in his mercy and wisdom had established for the salvation of the human race.[4] For Gregory, the emperor was "the most pious of princes" (*piissimos dominos*), "our most serene Lord of all things" (*serenissimis rerum dominis*), whose office was inseparably bound up with the purposes of God.[5] "For power over all men has been given by Heaven to my Lordship's piety for this reason", Gregory wrote to Maurice, "that those who seek good things are given help, that the path to Heaven is opened more widely, and that the earthly kingdom is in service to the heavenly kingdom."[6] The emperor's authority came from God for the furtherance of righteousness and good-living among human beings, the defence and extension of the gospel through the protection and patronage of the Church. The emperor's God-appointed task was to realize, in co-operation with leaders of the Church, God's own empire on earth, the reflection here below of the kingdom of heaven above.

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[3] *Reg.* 7.6, trans. John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, Medieval Sources in Translation, 3 vols (Toronto, 2004), 2:459 (CCSL 140:452–3): "Omnipotens Deus, qui pietatem uestram pacis ecclesiasticae fecit esse custodem, ipsa uos fide seruat, quam uos in sacerdotali unitate seruatis, cumque supernae pietatis iugo cor humiliter subditis, caelesti gratia agitur, ut hostes uestros pede fortitudinis prematis." Gregory uses the imperial plural.

[4] Paul Magdalino, "Church, Empire and Christendom in *c.*600 and *c.*1075: The View from the Registers of Popes Gregory I and Gregory VII," in *Cristianità d'Occidente e Cristianità d'Oriente (secoli VI–XI)*, Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo 51 (Spoleto, 2004), 1:1–30.

[5] *Reg.* 1.27, 1.6.

[6] *Reg.* 3.61, trans. Martyn, 1:281 (CCSL 140:210): "Ad hoc enim potestas super omnes homines pietati dominorum meorum caelitus data est, ut qui bona appetunt adiuuentur, ut caelorum uia largius pateat, ut terrestre regnum caelesti regno famuletur."

As we shall see, it is too much to dismiss these utterances as the empty flattery of diplomatic protocol. Rather, Gregory owed his conception of the role of the emperor in Christian society to a range of developments that had transformed the relationship between the Roman state and the Christian Church in Late Antiquity from one of antagonism to profound complementarity. In addition, tight personal bonds bound Gregory in a close, if not always easy, relationship to the emperor Maurice, the primary incumbent of imperial office during his pontificate, and his family and court.

Gregory came from one of the privileged, aristocratic families of the 6th-century city of Rome.[7] Ordained priest, Gregory was sent, in 579, to act as papal responsary, or *apocrisarius*, on behalf of Pope Pelagius II (579–90) at the imperial court at Constantinople, where he remained until his return to Italy in 585/6.[8] Gregory's arrival in the imperial capital followed shortly upon the accession of a new emperor, Tiberius II. During this reign the financial and strategic strains that had been accumulating for a generation continued to mount.[9] Despite Justinian's construction of defensive fortresses in the Balkans, throughout the second half of the 6th century Gepid, Avar, and later Slav, incursions destabilized these provinces, with Constantinople itself occasionally threatened with siege.[10] In 573, Sasanian Persia temporarily reversed the balance of power between the two great states of the contemporary Near East by capturing the Roman frontier stronghold of Dara.[11] In Italy, the fragile peace that had emerged with the conclusion of the Gothic Wars in 554 was shattered by the violent movement of the Lombards into the peninsula from 568.[12] The Lombard menace preoccupied the citizens of Rome: the senatorial embassy that travelled to Constantinople to present Tiberius with the

[7] For Gregory's life and times, see also Sofia Boesch Gajano, *Gregorio Magno: Alle origini del Medioevo* (Rome, 2004); and Barbara Müller, *Führung im Denken und Handeln Gregors des Grossen* (Tübingen, 2009).

[8] The *apocrisarius* served as the pope's representative in Constantinople: Peter Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages* (London, 1971), pp. 117–19; Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 10–12. Rome was not alone in sending an *apocrisarius* to Constantinople and the post should be viewed as an internal position within the imperial Church, not as the equivalent of a foreign ambassador.

[9] Peter Sarris, *Economy and Society in the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 222–7.

[10] Michael Whitby, *Emperor Maurice and his Historian* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 69–89.

[11] Geoffrey Greatrex and Samuel N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars. Part II: AD 363–600. A Narrative Sourcebook* (London, 2002), pp. 173–4.

[12] Thomas S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy A.D. 554–800* (London, 1984), pp. 1–21.

gold that was customarily paid on the accession of a new emperor was instructed to return to Italy and use the money to raise an army to defend Rome that the imperial government itself could not afford to send.[13] As the representative of Pope Pelagius II, Gregory renewed these appeals for help with as little success, and it is in this context—of an empire struggling to meet a host of challenges both fiscal and strategic, with the social pressures these generated—that oppressed Italian peasants sometimes fled to Lombard-held territories.[14] Given the contrast between the inflated claims of imperial rhetoric and the reality of the empire's straitened condition, it is not surprising that the biblical text that Gregory should have selected to expound at Constantinople was the Old Testament Book of Job, an extended reflection on the reversal of worldly fortune at the heart of the Hebrew Scriptures. But the choice itself suggests that he identified personally with the empire whose fortunes seemed to be so clearly in decline, even if his attitude towards its "worldly" capital was lukewarm.[15]

With the normal conditions of civilian and economic life in Italy disrupted, many members of the Italian aristocracy emigrated to the greater security of Constantinople.[16] As *apocrisarius*, Gregory naturally formed familiar and affectionate bonds with members of this group, well represented at court. From the letters which he continued to write to a number of these after his return to Italy, we learn that Gregory took particular pleasure and comfort from his relationship with a Roman matron named Rusticiana, a member of the distinguished senatorial *gens Anicii* and *Symmachi*, and her children, especially her daughters Eusebia and Gregoriana, lady-in-waiting to the empress.[17] With estates in Italy and Sicily and an ongoing interest in affairs at Rome, Rusticiana, whose daughter Eusebia married a representative of the great Egyptian land-owning family, the Apions, reflects the pan-Mediterranean character of court-society at Constantinople during the last decades of the 6th century.[18] Also belonging to this circle of Latin *émigrés* and their families were the devout Count

[13] Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, pp. 21–2, and 33–4.

[14] This emerges clearly from Gregory's letters. See, for example, *Reg.* 5.38; also Whitby, *Emperor Maurice*, pp. 11–13 and 24.

[15] *Reg.* 4.44, 8.22.

[16] Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, pp. 27–30.

[17] On Rusticiana, see Averil Cameron, "A Nativity Poem of the Sixth Century, A.D.," *Classical Philology* 79 (1979), 222–32, repr. in eadem, *Continuity and Change in Sixth-century Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1981), XIV.

[18] Sarris, *Economy and Society*, pp. 17–24.

Narses and Lady Dominica.[19] Despite occasional assertions of the collapse of Latin letters at Constantinople after the reign of Justinian, Gregory's correspondence shows us that it would be a mistake to imagine that the sole vehicle for communication in this world was Greek, or that its horizons failed to embrace the largely Latin-dominated territories of the West.[20]

Lodged, with a party of monks who had accompanied him from Rome, in the Palace of Hormisdas that stood alongside the church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus at the southern end of the great complex of imperial buildings occupying the eastern projection of Constantinople's peninsula, Gregory developed a range of friendships and acquaintances with other figures at court who remained important to him throughout his life.[21] Among these were envoys from the other patriarchal sees of the empire, such as Eulogius, a priest from Alexandria who later rose to become patriarch of that ancient see and remained one of Gregory's most frequent correspondents. Gregory also formed a close bond with Patriarch Anastasius of Antioch, who had been deposed by Justin II and had taken up residence in exile at Constantinople. Gregory, once elected bishop of Rome, invited the exiled patriarch to transfer his residence to the city that housed "the tomb of St. Peter... that, as far as it may thus please God, he allow you to live here with me."[22] Gregory also developed a strong alliance with Domitian, Archbishop of Melitene in Cappadocia, nephew to the emperor and one of Maurice's closest advisers.[23] As pope, Gregory continued to correspond with Domitian in order to keep abreast of developments in other parts of the empire.[24] He also befriended the imperial physicians, Theodore and Theotimus (who also treated Gregory himself),[25] and was familiar with the imperial secretary, Aristobulus; the *quaestor* and ex-consul, John; the

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[19] *Reg.* 1.6, 3.63, 6.14, 7.27.

[20] Averil Cameron, "Old and New Rome: Roman Studies in Sixth-century Constantinople," in *The Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown*, eds Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (Aldershot, 2009), pp. 15–36; cf. Gilbert Dagron, "Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine: langue de culture et langue d'État," *Revue historique* (1969), 23–56, repr. in idem, *La Romanité chrétienne en Orient* (London, 1984), I. On the state of Latinity in Italy during this period see Richard Pollard's chapter *infra*.

[21] There is a colourful if out-dated description of the city in F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great. His Place in History and Thought*, 2 vols (London, 1905), 1:123–57.

[22] *Reg.* 1.7, trans. Martyn, 1:126 (CCSL 140:9): "ad sancti Petri apostolorum principis limina uenire et quousque ita Deo placuerit hic mecum uiuere concedat...". Maurice restored Anastasius to his see in 593.

[23] Whitby, *Emperor Maurice*, p. 14.

[24] See, for instance, *Reg.* 3.62.

[25] *Reg.* 3.64, 5.46, 7.25 (Theodore); 3.65 (Theotimus).

chief of the imperial body guard, Philip; the patrician and general, Priscus; Gordia and Theoctista, the emperor's sisters; Theoctistus, the emperor's cousin; the Empress Constantina and Gregoriana, her lady-in-waiting.[26] The emperor himself Gregory viewed not only as a subject, but also as a friend.[27] Relationships such as these display Gregory's close involvement in the affairs of the court, and he retained many friends—and not a few enemies—at Constantinople.

That Gregory enjoyed the confidence of the imperial family was displayed in 584 when Emperor Maurice chose him as godfather for his son, Theodosius, the first imperial prince born to a reigning emperor since the early 5th century.[28] Although no letter addressed to this imperial godson survives, the longest extant letter in Gregory's collection is in fact addressed to Theoctista, the emperor's sister charged with the care of the imperial children.[29] Other letters are addressed to their tutor, Andrew.[30] Tragically, all of these children were the victims of the bloody *coup d'état* that overthrew Maurice in favour of the general Phocas in 602. Writing before this *coup*, Gregory, as his letters show, also thought about the succession. Fearful for the security of the empire, he instructed their nurse Theoctista to take particular care in the formation of the princes' moral character:[31]

> I beg you also to take care especially to teach morality to the dear young Lordships, whose nurse you are, and to remind the glorious eunuchs who have been allotted to them, that they should discuss those things with them that may make their minds contrite in their mutual love for each other, and in their clemency towards their subjects. Otherwise, if they should now feel some hatred between themselves, it might break out afterwards in the open.

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[26] *Reg.* 1.28 (Aristobulus); 1.30 (John); 1.31 (Philip); 3.51 (Priscus); 7.27 (Gordia); 1.5, 7.23, 11.27 (Theoctista); 6.17 (Theoctistus); 4.30, 5.38 (Constantina); 7.22 (Gregoria). See also John R. Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1992).

[27] *Reg.* 3.61 (CCSL 140:209).

[28] The child was born on 4 August 583: Whitby, *Emperor Maurice*, p. 18; Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, p. 12.

[29] *Reg.* 11.27; Martyn, *Letters of Gregory the Great*, 3:771, n. 172.

[30] *Reg.* 1.29, 7.23.

[31] *Reg.* 7.23, trans. Martyn, 2:476 (CCSL 140:476): "Peto autem ut paruulos dominos quos nutritis praecipue moribus instituere curetis et gloriosos eunuchos qui eis deputati sunt admonere ut ea illis loqui debeant, quae eorum mentes in caritate circa se inuicem et erga subiectos in mansuetudine compungant, ne, si quid odii inter se modo conceperint, in aperto postea erumpat."

Indeed, by the third decade of the 7th century, it was believed that Maurice had, in a revival of ancient custom, intended to divide the eastern and Western Empire between his two eldest sons, a sign that at Constantinople the western provinces were still considered a going imperial concern.[32]

As *apocrisarius*, Gregory was also involved in the intellectual life of the capital.[33] The route for this engagement lay in his extensive contacts among the clergy of the Great Church, with some of whom he was on clearly friendly terms, if not with others. Among the former were two future patriarchs of the city, John the Faster and Cyriacus. Although as pope Gregory would later clash with both over the contested matter of the patriarch's "ecumenical" title, Gregory's letters, whether to these men or to the emperor, inform us that he thought highly of their personal sanctity. Given his own commitment to the ascetic lifestyle, Gregory must have had a natural admiration for the sainted John, whose personal privations and reports of miracles made him famous in his own lifetime and, in death, a subject of the emperor's devotions.[34] With Eutychius, the incumbent patriarch of the city during the first part of Gregory's sojourn as *apocrisarius*, however, Gregory entertained much more difficult relations.[35] Not long after his arrival, Gregory took offence at a theological tract that Eutychius had composed on the nature of the resurrection body.[36] Although there was some support for Eutychius' views in the Greek fathers (as Eustratius, Eutychius' disciple and later apologist, argued in his *Life* of the patriarch), Eutychius' more immediate inspiration was a pamphlet on the

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[32] Gilbert Dagron, "Rome et l'Italie vues de Byzance (IVe–VIIe siècles)," in *Bisanzio, Roma e l'Italia nell'alto Medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo 34 (Spoleto, 1988), 45–64.

[33] Matthew Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 31–3.

[34] See Theophylact Simocatta, *Historia* 7.6.1–5 (ed. Carl de Boor [Leipzig, 1887]; trans. Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* [Oxford, 1986], p. 186).

[35] Averil Cameron, "Models of the Past in the Late Sixth Century: the Life of the Patriarch Eutychius," in *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity*, ed. Graeme Clarke (Rushcutters Bay, NSW, 1990), pp. 205–23, repr. in eadem, *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1996), II.

[36] Gregory the Great, *Mor.* 14.72 (CCSL 143A:743–44); Yves-Marie Duval, "La discussion entre l'apocrisiaire Grégoire et le patriarche Eutychios au sujet de la résurrection de la chair: l'arrière-plan doctrinal oriental et occidental," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 347–66.

same subject published *c.*575 by the Alexandrian philosopher-theologian John Philoponus.[37]

It is commonplace to cast Gregory's argument in favour of a fully corporeal resurrection as a reflection of the lower standards of contemporary Latin theology and a failure to understand the complex issues under discussion. However, a comparison with a third contemporary text shows that Gregory's position was itself part of the contemporary Greek debate, not a vulgarization of it.[38] In any case, Gregory's view received the approbation of Emperor Tiberius and Eutychius' tract was publicly burned. This victory garnered little favour for Gregory with those sections of the local clergy that supported their patriarch and Eustratius probably had Gregory in mind when, in his *Life of Eutychius*, he referred to the "wretches" who had defamed the orthodoxy of his patron.[39] Although he was in this case the accuser, when he looked back on his time at Constantinople, Gregory regretted the back-biting and heresy-hunting which he thought denatured spiritual life in the capital.[40] Indeed, Gregory's words suggest that the very high value placed on orthodoxy and personal piety at court created an atmosphere ripe for "witch hunts" against those who failed to subscribe to a range of religious opinions of questionable significance.

Even after his return to Rome, Gregory maintained a network of friendships with a range of men and women in Constantinopolitan society.[41] His personal circle clearly embraced both native Latin- and Greek-speakers, with consequences for his widely asserted ignorance of Greek.[42] Gregory

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[37] John of Ephesus, *HE* 2.42 (ed. and trans. Payne Smith [Oxford, 1860], p. 149). Fragments of John's tract survive in Syriac (ed. Albert van Roey, "Un traité cononite contre la doctrine de Jean Philopon sur la résurrection," in *Antidoron: Hulde aan Maurits Geerard bij de voltooiing van de Clavis Patrum Graecorum / Hommage à Maurits Geerard pour célébrer l'achèvement de la Clavis Patrum Graecorum* [Brussels, 1984], pp. 123–39).

[38] Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult*, pp. 134–48. The text in question is Stephen Gobar's compendium of opposing sentences: Adolph von Harnack, "The 'Sic et Non' of Stephen Gobarus," *Harvard Theological Review* 16 (1923), 205–34.

[39] Eustratius of Constantinople, *Vita Eutychii* (CCSG 25:2454–58). On Eustratius, see Nicholas Constas, "An Apology for the Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity: Eustratius Presbyter of Constantinople, *On the State of Souls after Death*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10 (2002), 267–85.

[40] *Reg.* 11.27. See also *Reg.* 6.16.

[41] See further Franca Ela Consolino, "Il papa e le regine: potere femminile e politica ecclesiastica nell'epistolario di Gregorio Magno," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, 1:225–49.

[42] See most recently Gerard J.M. Bartelink, "Pope Gregory the Great's Knowledge of Greek," trans. Paul Meyvaert, in *Gregory the Great: a Symposium*, ed. John C. Cavadini, Notre Dame Studies in Theology 2 (Notre Dame, IN, 1995), pp. 117–36; cf. Joan Petersen, "Did Gregory the Great know Greek?," in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. D. Baker, Studies in Church History 13 (Oxford, 1976), pp. 121–34.

disavowed any ability in the language, and it is unlikely that he was fully bilingual. Nevertheless, friendships such as those he maintained with men like Eulogius, Anastasius and Domitian can hardly have been conducted through interpreters alone. His relationship with his theological opponent, Eutychius, and his disciple, Eustratius, is equally complex, and it is difficult to imagine that Gregory took up such a prolonged and impassioned campaign against the bishop of the imperial city solely on the basis of a (putative) second-hand Latin translation of the latter's offending Greek tract. Similarly, Gregory seems to have been conversant with a contemporary Constantinopolitan debate about the posthumous activity of the souls of the saints that we otherwise hear about only in Greek.[43] On one occasion in his letters, it is true, Gregory informed his friend, the count Narses, that he had declined to reply to the missive sent to him by Lady Dominica, a mutual friend, "because although she is a Latin, she wrote to me in Greek."[44] But the lady in question would have scarcely written to him in that language if she believed her correspondent unable to comprehend the contents of her letter. Likewise, although Gregory bemoaned the word-for-word Greek translations of his letters that were made at Constantinople, the very complaint suggests that he was able to tell the difference between the official versions on offer and his view of the better Greek rendering.[45] Gregory's lamentations here might reflect the low quality of civil service recruits generally, rather than a serious contraction of the use of Latin at court or its extinction among the upper classes.

It has sometimes been implied in modern scholarship that as pope from 590 to 604 Gregory was merely a reluctant subject of the emperor at Constantinople. With his frequent invocation of Gregory's peculiarly "Roman" sensibilities, Erich Caspar's magisterial account implicitly cast the "Greeks" from the "East" as foreign intruders into Gregory's Italy.[46] In one of the most influential 20th-century analyses, Walter Ullmann held that Gregory was the author of a "policy of bifurcation" ("one fork

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[43] Matthew Dal Santo, "Gregory the Great and Eustratius of Constantinople: the *Dialogues on the Miracles of the Italian Fathers* as an Apology for the Cult of the Saints," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009), 421–57.

[44] *Reg.* 3.63, trans. Martyn, 1:285 (CCSL 140:214): "cum sit Latina Graece mihi scripsit."

[45] *Reg.* 1.28, 7.27; Martyn, *Letters of Gregory the Great*, 1:101.

[46] Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums: von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft*, 2 vols (Tübingen, 1930–33), 2:347–8, and esp. 457. Nevertheless, Caspar recognized that Gregory was fundamentally at home in the imperial Church ("Reichskirke") of the 6th century. See also Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand*, p. 436: "Ce Romain [...] est rempli de réserves à l'égard du monde oriental. [...] Grégoire est un fervent nationnaliste [...]."

to the East, one the West"), the "Father of Europe", the long-term result of whose policies was the successful emancipation of the papacy from the old empire, if not the liberation of Western Europe from a Byzantine captivity.[47] But, as Robert Markus has argued convincingly, Gregory entertained a view of the empire and of the emperor's place in Christian society (still largely coterminous in Gregory's day with the imperial frontiers or their maximum historical limits, even after the mission to the Anglo-Saxons) that fundamentally resonated with, and did not contradict, that which was observed and promoted by the emperor himself and his court at Constantinople.[48] Early last century, Homes Dudden, an astute student of Gregory, affirmed that:[49]

> This reverence for the Imperial Majesty was inculcated by no one more emphatically than by Gregory the Great. In the opinion of this Pope, the ruler's power was given to him by God. He was the Lord's anointed, God's earthly representative.... Nowhere in the works of the early Fathers do we find so explicit an affirmation of the Divine right of the ruler and of the necessity of absolute obedience to his commands.

Indeed, Gregory's conception of the nature of the emperor and his authority should be seen as part of a Justinianic inheritance from the first half of the 6th century.

It is mistaken to conceive of Gregory and his relationship to the empire outside this thought world. Christianity first secured the state's legal sanction under Constantine (305–37), and then a unique status under Theodosius II (408–50) as the sole official religion of the empire. Under Justinian, however, the Christian God and his ministers were acknowledged not only as playing an important role in the operation of the Roman state, but as actually representing the source of the emperor's authority and, indeed, the very origins of the imperial office.[50] In 535 Emperor Justinian, whose armies would soon set about the reconquest of Italy, addressed an

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[47] Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972; repr. 2003), pp. 54–8; and idem, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power* (London, 1955), pp. 36–8. Marc Reydellet, *La Royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Appolinaire à Isidore de Seville* (Rome, 1981), pp. 441–503, partly revives it.

[48] Markus, "Gregory the Great's Europe," p. 34. See also Eugen H. Fischer, "Gregor der Große und Byzanz: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der päpstlichen Politik," *Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte*, Kanonistische Abteilung 36 (1950), 15–144.

[49] Dudden, *Gregory the Great*, 2:248–9.

[50] See further Jean Gaudemet, "La législation anti-païenne de Constantin à Justinien," *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 11 (1990), 449–68.

edict to the patriarch of Constantinople. In its preface he set out his view of the nature of the imperial office and its relationship to the Christian Church and its leaders:[51]

> The greatest gifts that God's heavenly *philanthropia* have bestowed upon men are the *sacerdotium* and the *basileia*, of which the former serves divine matters, the latter presides and watches over human affairs, and both proceed from one and the same principle and regulate human life. For this reason, nothing should claim the emperors' care so much as the saintliness of the priests, since these constantly pray to God for them [i.e. the emperors]. For, if the priesthood is in every way blameless and acceptable to God, and the *basileia* rules justly and properly over the state entrusted to it, good harmony will result, which will bestow whatever is beneficial upon the human race.

Whereas earlier representations of the political compact by which the Roman state was governed had perceived the origins of the imperial office as lying in the magistracies established by the citizens of the city of Rome during the Republic, Justinian identified God alone as the fount of both its theoretical legitimacy and its practical power to command obedience.[52] This was a significant milestone in the historical development of the constitution of the Roman Empire. Frequent references to the *Corpus iuris civilis* in Gregory's correspondence indicate his familiarity with Justinian's legal works.[53] We need not be surprised, therefore, if we find in Gregory's letters a conception of the imperial office, the empire and the relationship of both to the Church that echo Justinian's.

By the end of the 6th century, Justinian's conception of the role of the emperor had become an accepted element of the worldview of a wide section of Roman/Christian society.[54] Both the empire and emperor were

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[51] Justinian, *Novella* 6, Preface, cited in Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background*, 2 vols (Washington, D.C., 1966), 2:816. For the Greek with Latin translation, see *Corpus iuris civilis*, eds Rudolph Schöll, William Kroll, Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krüger, 3 vols, 9th ed. (Frankfurt, 1954; repr. Zürich, 1968), 3:35–6.

[52] Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*, 2:716–23, 838; Gilbert Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre: Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin* (Paris, 1996), pp. 312–13.

[53] Markus, *Gregory*, p. 83 n. 2; Fischer, "Gregor der Große," 137–38; and Jenal, *Italia ascetica atque monastica*, 2:824. In his early career, Gregory served either as *praetor* (chief legal officer) or Urban Prefect of Rome (or perhaps both). Knowledge of the existing laws would have been a necessity: Martyn, *Letters of Gregory the Great*, 1:3–4.

[54] Acceptance of the Christianization of the imperial office was not, however, universal. See Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*, 2:711–12, who points to the "revolutionary criticism" of this principle, *c.*557–60, by the philosopher John Philoponus; Matthew Dal Santo, "The God-guarded empire? Scepticism towards the saints' cult in early

now defined as being expressly "Christian", and were understood by contemporaries as imbued with a special purpose in God's merciful dispensation towards humankind. From this flowed the almost unquestioned authority of the emperor and his agents to intervene, where appropriate, to ensure the peace and order of the Church and the holiness of its ministers; in return, the emperor enjoyed the right to count on the unfailing prayers which the latter offered before God for the prosperity of the Christian empire. Gregory shared both of these assumptions. He was generally prepared to accept the emperor's involvement in the removal and appointment of bishops,[55] and the unceasing duty of the priests of the church to intercede on behalf of his "most pious Lord" (*piissimus dominus*), the emperor, and the "most holy commonwealth" (*sanctissima res publica*) is a constant theme of his surviving letters. In a letter to Patriarch Cyriacus of Constantinople, Gregory thus asserted that "we [i.e. as priests] must pray incessantly for the life of our most serene Majesty, and for his holy offspring also, praying that almighty God subject barbarous nations beneath their feet and grant them long and happy lives, so that the faith which is in Christ may reign throughout a Christian empire."[56] Similarly, to all the bishops of Greece, the pope expressed his hope that they would join with him in order to "continually pray with one heart on behalf of our most serene Majesty and his holy offspring as best we can, and with many tears, asking that heavenly grace may protect and safeguard their lives, and subject the necks of all nations to the Christian empire."[57]

To Gregory, the emperor was, quite simply, "appointed by God", and his life was "extremely necessary for the world."[58] Thus, Gregory addressed Maurice as "[o]ur most pious Lordship, appointed by God", who, faithful to the Justinianic paradigm, "among the other cares of imperial burdens, also pays attention to the preservation of the rightness of priestly

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Byzantium," in *An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*, eds Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo and Phil Booth (Leiden, 2011), pp. 129–49.

[55] *Reg.* 11.29.

[56] *Reg.* 7.5 (CCSL 140:452): "pro serenissum dominorum uita, pro pia quoque subole incessanter orandum est, ut omnipotens Deus eorum pedibus barbaras nationes subicat, longa eis et felicia tempora concedat, quatenus per christianum imperium ea quae in Christo est fides regnet."

[57] *Reg.* 7.7, trans. Martyn, 2:462 (CCSL 140:456): "pro serenissimis dominis eorumque subole cum magnis in quantum possumus assidue fletibus oremus, ut eorum uitam protegens gratia superna custodiat et christiano imperio gentium colla substernat."

[58] *Reg.* 5.37 (CCSL 140:308): *a Deo constitutus*; *Reg.* 7.24 (CCSL 140:480): "ualde est uita eius mundo necessaria."

love with spiritual zeal."[59] Gregory prayed, moreover, that "almighty God watch over the life of our most serene Lordship, for a long length of time, both for the peace of the Holy Church and for the advantage of the Roman republic."[60]

But perhaps nowhere did Gregory give stronger expression to his fundamentally "Justinianic" conception of the interpenetrating vocation of Church and empire than in the following passage, written to the emperor in the context of the disputed politics of the Church in Africa. Hoping that Maurice would use his "earthly" authority to compel "Donatist" schismatics to return to the imperial Church, Gregory stated that:[61]

> Among the cares of warfare and countless worries which you endure with tireless zeal, for the sake of governing a Christian republic, there is a great cause of joy for me and the entire world, because your Piety always looks after the custody of our faith with that special concern with which the empire of your Lordship shines brightly. I am entirely confident, therefore, that just as you protect the rights of God with the love of a religious mind, even so God protects and assists yours with the grace of his majesty.

Clearly, such rhetoric was often employed to sway the emperor towards those courses of action that Gregory himself favoured. But it cannot be doubted that Gregory subscribed to this dispensation that linked, in a relationship of mutual benefit, the emperor's pious endeavours on behalf of the faith to God's expected preservation of the internal peace and external security of the Christian empire. In this, the empress too had a role to play. To Constantina, Maurice's consort, Gregory wrote:[62]

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[59] *Reg.* 5.37, trans. Martyn 2:351 (CCSL 140:308): "Piissimus atque a Deo constitutus dominus noster inter ceteras augustorum ponderum curas pro conseruanda quoque sacerdotalis caritatis rectitudine studio spiritali inuigilat."

[60] *Reg.* 7.30, trans. Martyn, 2:287 (CCSL 140:491): "Omnipotens autem Deus serenissimi domini nostri uitam et ad pacem sanctae ecclesiae et ad utilitatem Romanae reipublicae per tempora longa custodiat."

[61] *Reg.* 6.64, trans. Martyn, 2:248 (modified) (CCSL 140:439): "Inter armorum curas et innumeras sollicitudines, quas indefesso studio pro christianae reipublicae regimine sustinetis, magna mihi cum uniuerso mundo laetitiae causa est, quod pietas uestra custodiae fidei, qua dominorum fulget imperium, praecipua sollicitudine semper inuigilat. Vnde omnino confido quia, sicut uos Dei causas religiosae mentis amore tuemini, ita Deus uestras maiestatis suae gratia tuetur et adiuuat." For Africa, see Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 193–9.

[62] *Reg.* 5.39, trans. Martyn, 2:355–6 (CCSL 140:314–15): "Omnipotens Deus, qui pietatis uestrae cor suae dextera maiestatis tenet, et nos ex uobis protegit et uobis pro temporalibus actibus praemia remunerationis parat.... Vestra itaque pietas, quam omnipotens Deus cum serenissimo domino uniuerso mundo praeesse constituit, illi per fauorem iustitiae suum famulatum reddat, a quo ius tantae potestatis accepit, ut quanto uerius in exsecutione ueritatis auctori omnium seruit, tanto securius comisso mundo dominetur."

> Almighty God, who holds the heart of your Piety in the right hand of his majesty, both gives us protection through you, and provides you with rewards of eternal recompense in return for your actions here on earth..... And so, as Almighty God has established you as ruler of the universal world, together with your most serene Lordship, may your Piety through the favour of justice render your service to Him, from whom you received the right of such great power. Thus the more truly you serve the Creator of all things in the execution of the truth, the more securely you would control the world entrusted to you.

These were lofty ideas and they did not exclude, in practice, disagreement between pope and emperor, as we shall see.

To be sure, the Roman papacy had a history of contesting the authority of Roman emperors in ecclesiastical affairs, a tradition represented above all by the conflicts that coloured the pontificate of Gelasius at the end of the 5th century.[63] But it is best to repeat the conclusion that Robert Markus reached when surveying the same evidence:[64]

> The Empire—the Empire of Justinian and his immediate successors—was both the major sphere of the pope's activities and the permanent backdrop to all his awareness. Justinian was the watershed which divided the papacy of Gregory I from that of Gelasius a century before him.

In other words, Gregory was very much a man of his time and it is a mistake to try to understand his conception of the relationship between the imperial and ecclesiastical spheres from either a pre-Justinianic or medieval point of view. For these spheres were not at all separate, but inter-penetrating in their rights and duties.

In the second half of the 6th century, moreover, Christian symbols and rituals assumed an ever greater role in the life of the court, helping promote the notion that the Roman empire was "God-protected".[65] It was a vision that Gregory seems to have internalized deeply. In a letter addressed to Leontia, consort of the usurper Phocas in 603, Gregory zealously besought the empress to:[66]

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[63] Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*, 2:804–9.

[64] Markus, "Gregory the Great's Europe," p. 22.

[65] See esp. Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3–35, repr. in eadem, *Continuity and Change*, XVIII.

[66] *Reg.* 13.40, trans. Martyn, 3:855 (CCSL 140A:1044): "Ipse igitur sit uestri custos imperii, sit uobis protector in terra, sit pro uobis intercessor in caelo, ut per hoc, quod releuatis duris ponderibus in uestro imperio subiectos gaudere facitis, post multa annorum tempora in caelesti regno gaudeatis."

> [L]et God himself be the guardian of your empire, let him be your protector on earth and let him intercede for you in heaven, so that through the fact that you make the subjects of your empire rejoice by relieving their harsh burdens, you may yourself rejoice in the heavenly kingdom after many periods of years.

Reflecting the importance of public intercession for the emperor at this time, Gregory understood that the peace of this "God-guarded empire" was secured through the prayers of the leaders of the Church.[67] Gregory asked of Maurice:[68]

> For what human virtue, most serene Lordship, what mortal strength of arm would presume to raise its irreligious hands against the glory of your most Christian empire, if the minds of priests burned to beseech their Redeemer as one, on your behalf, and, as was proper, of your merits?

His squabble with the patriarch of Constantinople over the "ecumenical" title which was frequently attributed to the latter was so grave precisely because it threatened the unity of the priesthood whose intercessions ensured the empire's safety.[69] Not a political theorist, Gregory the Great was nevertheless a master observer of the political ideals of his day.

The heightened Christian ethos of Maurice's court was also reflected in the ostentatious piety of that segment of Constantinople's aristocracy with which Gregory corresponded.[70] The prominence of the Bible and biblical metaphors in this correspondence is striking and, to a very large extent, the Bible and Bible-reading provided the common language and habits of thought and activity that knit Gregory and his correspondents together.[71] This dependence on the Bible was complemented practically with public almsgiving.[72] They went hand-in-hand, as when, in June 595, Gregory wrote to thank Theodore, the court physician, for the gold he

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[67] Averil Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-century Constantinople: A City Finds its Symbol," *Journal of Theological Studies* n. s. 29 (1978), 79–108 at 106, repr. in eadem, *Changing Cultures*, XVI.

[68] *Reg.* 5.37, trans. Martyn, 2:351 (CCSL 140:308): "Quae enim, serenissime domine, uirtus humana, quod carnei robur brachii contra uestri christianissimi culmen imperii irreligiosas praesumat manus erigere, si studeret concors sacerdotum mens redemptorem suum lingua pro uobis atque, ut oportebat, meritis exorare?"

[69] *Reg.* 7.28, 9.136; Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 91–5.

[70] Nevertheless, appreciation for classical culture persisted well into the 7th century: Ruth E. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and meanings of silver plate in the fourth to seventh centuries* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 173–7, 204–8; Sarris, *Economy and Society*, pp. 221–2.

[71] See *Reg.* 3.62, 3.63, 3.65.

[72] Note Maurice's very public almsgiving for the poor of Rome: *Reg.* 5.30.

sent to Rome to embellish the tomb of St. Peter. For Gregory concluded his epistle with an exhortation that Theodore carry on with his daily Bible reading, a habit he had evidently given the pope reason to believe he was neglecting. "What is Holy Scripture other than a letter of almighty God to his creation?" Gregory remonstrated. "Study, I beg you, and each day meditate on the words of your Creator."[73]

The imperial physician was not alone in receiving pious encouragement of this kind and Gregory seems to have acted as a spiritual confessor for many members of Constantinople's court circle. He had a reputation as an esteemed spiritual writer: Anatolius, a Roman deacon and one of Gregory's own representatives at Constantinople after his election as pope, thought it worthwhile to present a copy of Gregory's celebrated (and Latin) *Rule of Pastoral Care* to the Emperor Maurice, who was "seeking and ordering a copy" (*quaerenti ac iubenti*), while Gregory's friend, Anastasius of Antioch, translated it into Greek.[74] Another courtier asked Gregory to write an edifying tract on the spiritual life for the monasteries that he had established in Constantinople; although Gregory declined to do so, he asked for news of the spiritual progress of a number of high-ranking members of society.[75] To Gregoriana, lady-in-waiting to the empress, Gregory offered spiritual direction based on the gospel story of Mary and Martha, urging her every day to bewail her sins.[76] The empress herself was offered similar advice.[77] Many others received, as tokens of thanks for the alms they had sent over to Rome, filings from St. Peter's chains.[78] The most remarkable gift of this kind (a key imbued with the apostle's blessing) was that which Gregory dispatched to Theoctista (a woman Gregory elsewhere described as "spending [her] life incessantly in reading the Bible, in weeping and in acts of charity"),[79] nurse to the imperial offspring, whose miraculous powers Gregory confirmed with the story of a miracle which the relic was

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[73] *Reg.* 5.46, trans. Martyn, 2:373 (CCSL 140:399–40): "Quid autem est scriptura sacra nisi quaedem epistula omnipotentis Dei ad creaturam suam?... Stude, quaeso, et cotidie creatoris tui uerba meditare."

[74] *Reg.* 12.6, trans. Martyn, 3:811 (CCSL 140A:976). Both actions allegedly displeased the humble pope! See further Rita Lizzi, "La traduzione greca delle opere di Gregorio Magno dalla *Regula Pastoralis* ai *Dialogi*," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo* (Rome, 1991), 2:41–57.

[75] *Reg.* 7.27.

[76] *Reg.* 7.22.

[77] See *Reg.* 7.23.

[78] See Grazia Rispardi, "I doni nell'epistolario di Gregorio Magno," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, 2:285–300.

[79] *Reg.* 11.27, trans. Martyn, 3:771 (CCSL 140A:913): "in lectione, in lacrimis atque in elemosinis incessabiliter uiuit."

allegedly responsible for performing when held by its previous Lombard owners north of the Po.[80]

The tokens (*benedictiones*) associated with St. Peter that Gregory bestowed upon his friends perhaps reflect the important role that patronage of saints' cults played in promoting the pious image of the court. As part of his programme, Maurice sought to add significantly to the saintly relics conserved at Constantinople.[81] Yet, when Empress Constantina asked Gregory to contribute to this project by sending to Constantinople the head of St. Paul (which was conserved with his body at Rome), Gregory politely declined.[82] Explaining that Roman custom did not permit the dismemberment of the saints' bodies, Gregory volunteered to expedite instead some portions from the chains that had been used to bind the apostle and which, he assured her, were producing many miracles in public.[83] He prayed that the empress would "always enjoy the power of the holy apostles, whom you love with all your heart and mind, not because of their bodily presence, but their protection."[84]

Gregory's handling of the empress's request testifies to the forthrightness with which Gregory could assert his own opinions and judgements *vis-à-vis* the court. For neither Gregory's devotion to the emperor's God-given role in Christian society, nor his belief that the extension of the Christian empire played a fundamental role in God's plan for the salvation of humankind, prevented the bishop of Rome from voicing disagreement with the policies pursued by the emperor. In 592/3, Maurice enacted a law that sought to prevent office holders in the civil administration and the army, throughout the empire, from escaping their responsibilities by taking holy orders as a priest or entering a monastery.[85] Gregory remonstrated

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[80] *Reg.* 7.23. For Gregory's love of miracle stories, see also *Reg.* 11.26; and Matthew Dal Santo, "The Shadow of a Doubt? A Note on the *Dialogues* and *Registrum Epistolarum* of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604)," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61 (2010), 3–17.

[81] Whitby, *Emperor Maurice*, pp. 22–3.

[82] *Reg.* 4.30 (CCSL 140:150).

[83] Ibid. (CCSL 140:150). On this episode see John McCulloh, "The Cult of Relics in the Letters and *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great: A Lexicographical Study," *Traditio* 32 (1976), 145–84. On Gregory and the cult of relics, see further Conrad Leyser, "The temptations of cult: Roman martyr piety in the age of Gregory the Great," *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000), 289–307.

[84] Ibid., trans. Martyn, 1:312 (CCSL 140:150): "sanctorum apostolorum uirtutem, quos tot corde et mente diligitis, non ex corporali praesentia sed ex protectione semper habebitis." Note the comparable reaction of Bishop Eusebius of Thessalonica when ordered to send some of the relics of his city's patron, St. Demetrius, to Constantinople: Paul Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de saint Démétrius*, 2 vols (Paris, 1979), 1:87.

[85] Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 87–9.

vigorously with the emperor to repeal the new law.[86] Arguing that no emperor since the reviled Julian the Apostate (361–3) had enacted legislation so inimical to the interests of God, Gregory even presumed to speak with the voice of Christ himself, reviewing his friend's *curriculum vitae*. The passage reveals again Gregory's innate, and very "Byzantine", sense of the origins of the imperial office in an election made by Christ and its incumbent's duties towards the Christian priesthood:[87]

> [B]ehold, Christ answers through me, the lowest of his servants and of yours, saying: "From notary I made you commander of the imperial guard, from commander of the imperial guard I made you crown prince, from crown prince I made you emperor, and not just this, but even I made you father of emperors. I have entrusted my priests to your hand, and you withdraw your soldiers from my service."

Nevertheless, Gregory, "being subject to the emperor's command" (*iussione subiectus*), was prepared to publish the law. Eventually, it seems, Maurice did modify it in response to Gregory's protests so that only those still under a legal obligation or financially indebted to the state found their paths to holy orders blocked.[88]

Another conflict ("the severest crisis of Gregory's pontificate")[89] emerged over Gregory's attempt in 595 to conclude a peace treaty with the Lombard king, Agilulf. Although a fragile agreement was eventually secured, this was not until after the emperor had accused Gregory of dangerous naivety in the confidence he was willing to place in Lombard promises, while Gregory made the counter-accusation that Maurice and his government were being negligent in their defence of Italy.[90] Gregory is sometimes portrayed as having treated unilaterally with the Lombards in this affair, but his own account reveals that he acted in concert with the two highest-ranking imperial officials in Italy after the exarch, the praetorian prefect and Rome's *magister militum*.[91] Gregory and Maurice were also at

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[86] See *Reg.* 3.61, 3.64.

[87] *Reg.* 3.61, trans. Martyn, 1:281 (CCSL 140:210): "ecce per me seruum ultimum suum et uestrum respondit Christus, dicens: Ego te de notario comitem scubitorum, de comite scubitorum caesarem, de caesare imperatorem, nec solum hoc, sed etiam patrem imperatorum feci. Sacerdotes meos tuae manui commisi, et tu a meo seruitio milites tuos subtrahis."

[88] Ibid., 1:282 (CCSL 140:210). See further *Reg.* 8.10, 10.9.

[89] Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 104–6.

[90] *Reg.* 5.36.

[91] The name of the latter was Castus. He is described as "chief of the household guard" in *Reg.* 5.30, and was involved with the pope in the payment of the troops defending Rome.

loggerheads about the best way to handle the schismatic bishops of the churches of Istria in northern Italy, a dispute in which Gregory might be accused of having attempted to be more "orthodox than emperor".[92] While Maurice was prepared to tolerate the schismatics until the war against the Lombards could be concluded, Gregory pressed for their arrest and forceful return to the bosom of the imperial Church forthwith.[93] In this case, his complaint stemmed not from an excess of imperial "interference" in church affairs, but a deficiency in it.

It was once alleged that Gregory, through his careful re-organization of the Church's patrimony or landed estates, laid the foundations for the fiscal base of the independent papal state of the Middle Ages.[94] But imperial officials were clearly still involved in regulating the grain supply to Rome, Naples and other Italian cities.[95] In any case, the problem here, for western medievalists, seems to be one of perspective. For at the end of the 6th century the secular responsibilities which Gregory assumed as bishop of one of the empire's major cities were not unusual. On the contrary, these duties (overseeing the peace of the city, the collection of taxes, the distribution of bread and the payment and provisioning of local units of the army) were among the long-term results of Justinian's restructuring of government across the empire.[96] A comparison can be made with the patriarchs of Alexandria, also called "popes".[97] Patriarch John the Almsgiver (610–19) was credited with a significant role in the civil administration of the city, while his successor, Cyrus (631–43), was effectively governor of Egypt on the eve of the Arab conquest.[98] In Antioch,

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[92] Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 125–33; Claire Sotinel, "The Three Chapters and the Transformations of Italy," in *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-century Mediterranean*, eds Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubitt (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 85–120.

[93] Paul Meyvaert, "A Letter of Pelagius II Composed by Gregory the Great," in *Gregory the Great*, ed. Cavadini, pp. 94–116; and Robert Coates-Stephens, "Sulla fondazione di S. Maria in Domnica," in *Scavi e scoperte recenti nelle chiese di Roma—Atti della giornata tematica dei Seminari di Archeologia Cristiana, Roma—13 marzo 2008*, eds Hugo Brandenburg and Federico Guidobaldi, Sussidi allo studio delle Antichità Cristiane 21 (Vatican City, 2012), pp. 77–91.

[94] Ullmann, *Short History of the Papacy*, pp. 53–4. Cf. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, 2012, pp. 112–24.

[95] *Reg.* 9.116, 10.8.

[96] Sarris, *Economy and Society*, p. 207; also Mark Whittow, "Ruling the Late Roman and Early Byzantine City: A Continuous History," *Past and Present* 129 (1990), 3–29 at 12.

[97] On the title in this period, see John Moorhead, "*Papa* as 'bishop of Rome'," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (1985), 337–50.

[98] See the *Life of John the Almsgiver* in *Léontios de Néapolis: Vie de Syméon le Fou, Vie de Jean de Chypre*, eds André-Jean Festugière and Lennart Rydén (Paris, 1974); Walter E.

too, Patriarch Gregory I (570–92) provisioned and equipped the imperial army.[99] Hence, while the *magister militum* referred to in a number of Gregory's letters was responsible for the defence of the city of Rome, Gregory, as the army's self-styled "paymaster", was fulfilling the role allotted to him as bishop within the imperial system, not usurping a "secular" responsibility for the sake of establishing an alternative episcopal power-base. In the Justinianic dispensation that Gregory clearly accepted, there was no room for an opposition between "secular" and "spiritual" authorities, as both were mingled for the benefit of a single Christian empire.[100]

It is also important not to downplay the extent of the emperor's authority in early "Byzantine" Rome, which remained significant throughout this period.[101] The supreme embodiment of imperial authority in Gregory's Italy was the exarch at Ravenna. This post combined military and civilian responsibilities and Gregory's relationship with its incumbent could be very strained.[102] In Rome itself, a subordinate military governor appears to have resided in the old imperial palace on the Palatine Hill, the emperors' ancient seat.[103] Friction could and did arise between Gregory and other imperial officials when, as in the case of an imperial investigation into high-level corruption in Sicily, Gregory believed the emperor's agents abused their powers.[104] Yet he famously reminded Leontius, *praetor* of Sicily, that the emperor's laws had always to be respected: "For there is a difference between people's kings and a Roman emperor: the

Kaegi, "Egypt on the eve of the Muslim conquest," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1, *Islamic Egypt, 640–1517* (Cambridge, 1998), 34–61.

[99] Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE* 6.11 (eds J. Bidez and L. Parmentier [London, 1898], pp. 228–9; trans. Michael Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* [Liverpool, 2000], pp. 301–2).

[100] Markus, "Gregory the Great's Europe," p. 22.

[101] Mark Humphries, "From Emperor to Pope? Ceremonial, Space, and Authority at Rome from Constantine to Gregory the Great," in *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900*, eds Kate Cooper and Julia Hillner (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 21–58; Robert Coates-Stephens, "Byzantine Building Patronage in Post-reconquest Rome," in *Les Cités de l'Italie tardo-antique (IVe–VIe siècle): Institutions, économie, société, culture et religion*, eds Massimiliano Ghilardi, Christophe J. Goddard and Pierfrancesco Porena, Collection de l'École française de Rome 369 (Rome, 2006), pp. 149–66.

[102] Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, p. 102.

[103] Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, pp. 54–5; Andrea Augenti, "Continuity and discontinuity of a seat of power: the Palatine Hill from the fifth to the tenth century," in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, ed. Julia M. H. Smith (Leiden, 2000), pp. 43–53.

[104] *Reg.* 8.33, 9.32, 9.34, 9.46, 9.55, 11.4; Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, pp. 152–3.

kings of peoples are masters of slaves, but a Roman emperor is master of free men."[105]

Some have argued that Gregory's attitudes towards secular power were profoundly ambivalent.[106] But although Gregory in his *Moralia* likened imperial power to a "rhinoceros", the destructive potential of whose unbridled might the agents of the Church must direct towards useful purposes, it would be an error to interpret Gregory's frustrations as antipathy towards the emperor or the imperial dispensation he represented. An imperial commander prosecuting the war against the Lombards in Italy, for example, Gregory exhorted to "do whatever remains for you to do for the good of the Republic, with the help of God."[107] In 592, he informed the soldiery of Naples that "[t]he highest military glory among other worthy services is this, to offer obedience to what benefits our holy republic, and to submit to whatever has been ordered for its advantage."[108] They were thus to submit in obedience to the imperial commander set over them "for the interests of our most serene Lordship" (*pro serenissimorum dominorum utilitate*).[109] Gregory's loyalty was due, at least in part, to the fundamental role which the Christian empire always retained in God's purposes. This is well demonstrated in the words of Gregory's admonition to the exarch of Africa. War against the barbarians was to be waged,[110]

> not from a desire to pour out men's blood, but for the sake of extending the republic's domain, in which we see the worship of God, so that the name of Christ spreads in every direction through the subject nations through the preaching of the faith.

As the empire's bounds grew wider, so, Gregory imagined, did the salvation of God through the offices of the imperial Church.

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[105] *Reg.* 11.4, trans. Martyn, 3:738 (CCSL 140A:862): "Hoc enim inter reges gentium et imperatorem Romanorum distat, quia reges gentium domini seruorum sunt, imperator uero Romanorum dominus liberorum."

[106] Straw, "Gregory's Politics," 1:58–60; cf. Hipshon, "Gregory the Great's Political Thought," 449–50 (as in n. 1); Reydellet, *Royauté dans la littérature latine*, pp. 474–9.

[107] *Reg.* 2.4, trans. Martyn, 1:195 (CCSL 140:92): "quaecumque uobis Deo adiutore pro utilitate rei publicae steterint, facite."

[108] *Reg.* 2.47, trans. Martyn, 1:227 (CCSL 140:138–9): "Summa militiae laus inter alia bona merita haec est, oboedientiam sanctae rei publicae utilitatibus exhibere, quodque sibi utiliter imperatum fuerit obtemperare."

[109] Ibid. (CCSL 140:139).

[110] *Reg.* 1.73, trans. Martyn, 1:187 (CCSL 140:81–2): "bella uos frequenter appetere non desiderio fundendi sanguinis sed dilatandae causa rei publicae, in qua Deum coli conspicimus, loqueretur, quatenus Christi nomen per subditas gentes fidei praedicatione circumquaque discurreret."

It is also an error to see in the mission that Gregory sent to the kingdom of Kent an effort to liberate the Roman Church from the confines of the empire.[111] Indeed, as Robert Markus has shown, the empire was a model for the Anglo-Saxons' conversion in Gregory's letters to the Kentish king, Æthelbert.[112] News of the mission had reached the emperor's ears and thrilled Constantinople, Gregory reported: Æthelbert should now conduct himself as a new Constantine, his queen, Bertha, as a new Helena.[113] One of the attractions with which Gregory hoped to entice his new converts was thus participation in the splendid spiritual *éclat* of a greater imperial commonwealth. Neither were Gregory's missionary and "strategic" interests confined to the West. He was concerned about the health and security of the empire's frontier in the East, too, and used his contacts with Domitian of Melitene to keep informed about the attempted, if ultimately abortive, conversion of the Persian king, Khusro II.[114] Gregory, like others at the time, clearly felt some misgivings about the alliance towards which Maurice guided the Christian empire and its ancient foe.[115] But despite the strains and disagreements that evidently attended their friendship, Gregory and the emperor did not grow permanently embittered. "Let your Lordship's piety consider me your personal friend", Gregory wrote on one occasion, "as you have always specially supported and preserved me. For I desire to offer my obedience to you."[116] The words could describe the attitude that Gregory maintained throughout his pontificate and, indeed, his life towards a sovereign to whom personal bonds committed him as much as the Justinianic ideology of the God-appointed Christian emperor.[117]

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[111] Ullmann, *Short History of the Papacy*, pp. 54–5; also Reydellet, *Royauté dans la littérature latine*, pp. 454–5. Cf. Charles and Luce Pietri, "Église universelle et *respublica christiana* selon Grégoire le grand," in *Memoriam Sanctorum Venerantes: Miscellanea in onore di Monsignor Victor Saxer* (Vatican City, 1992), 647–65.

[112] Markus, "Gregory the Great's Europe," p. 25.

[113] *Reg.* 11.35, 11.37.

[114] *Reg.* 3.62, 3.64.

[115] *Reg.* 3.62. See also John of Nikiu, *Chronicon*, 96.12 in Robert H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu* (London, 1916), p. 156.

[116] *Reg.* 5.37, trans. Martyn, 2:353 (CCSL 140:311): "Cogitet igitur dominorum pietas de me proprio suo, quem specialiter prae ceteris semper fouit atque continuit, qui et uobis oboedentiam praebere desidero."

[117] See also *Reg.* 6.16, trans. Martyn, 2:414 (CCSL 140:385): "sincera in uobis, christianissme principum, uelt emissum caelitus iubar fidei rectitudo resplendeat." That Maurice had called him "naive" (*fatuus*) only a few months before (*Reg.* 5.36) seems to have been forgotten. In 599 he affirmed Maurice's solicitousness for the security of Rome (*Reg.* 9.240), and in 601 he wrote to his friend, Theoctista, the emperor's sister, that "we should pray for the same

Yet this only makes the enthusiasm with which Gregory greeted the news of the accession of the new emperor, Phocas, all the more perplexing. The latter overthrew Maurice in a bloody *putsch* in November 602 after the emperor had ordered the armies serving in the Balkans to winter beyond the Danube.[118] Maurice was arrested and executed with his heirs, although it was rumoured for a time that Theodosius had survived and fled to the Persians. Despite his being godfather to Theodosius, Gregory nevertheless chose to greet the new emperor with the words of the angels to the shepherds at Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14).[119] His opening letter to the new empress, Leontia, was even more obsequious.[120] Given his close connections to Maurice, Gregory probably feared that his loyalty would be questioned if not strongly affirmed, and he knew that the consequences of being too closely associated with the old regime could be dangerous. Certainly, Gregory tried to persuade Eusebia, daughter of his old friend, Rusticiana, and a figure at Maurice's court, to escape the "tumultuous entanglements of the imperial city", the "overflowing tumults of that city", by relocating to Rome.[121] Indeed, his correspondence with Phocas can be read as containing an implicit warning. Gregory asserted:[122]

> Sometimes, when the sins of many are to be punished, one man arises, through whose harshness his subjects' necks may be crushed under a yoke of tribulation... At other times, when a merciful God decides to revive the grieving hearts of many men with consolation, he raises one man to the highest rule and through the depths of his mercy pours the grace of his exultation into the minds of all men.

Lordship continually, asking that his life and those of all his family may be preserved by the protection of heavenly grace for a long and peaceful time": *Reg.* 11.27, trans. Martyn, 3:763 (CCSL 140A:902): "pro eisdem dominis continue nobis orandum est, ut eorum uita cum suis omnibus protegente caelesti gratia per longa tempora et tranquilla seruetur."

[118] Whitby, *Emperor Maurice*, pp. 24–7.

[119] *Reg.* 13.32.

[120] *Reg.* 13.40.

[121] *Reg.* 13.33, trans. Martyn, 3:849 (CCSL 140A:1034–5): "regiae ciuitatis tumultuosis implicationibus..., ciuitatis illius superfluis tumultibus." Martyn views the letter as a coded invitation to join the pontiff in Rome.

[122] *Reg.* 13.32, trans. Martyn, 3:848 (CCSL 140A:1033): "aliquando, cum multorum peccata ferienda sunt, unus erigitur, per cuius duritiam tribulationis iugo subiectorum colla deprimantur.... Aliquando uero cum misericors Deus maerentia multorum corda sua decernit consolatione refouere, unum ad regiminis culmen prouehit et per eius misericordiae uiscera in cunctorum mentibus exsultationis suae gratiam infundit."

Doubtless, Gregory meant it to be understood that Maurice was the former and Phocas the latter, but he does not explicitly identify either man, and other meanings can be implied. Moreover, Gregory exhorted Phocas to act with restraint and be mindful of the requirements of divine justice, which presupposed the possibility of further cruelties on the new emperor's part.

However much a murderer, Phocas was now the emperor: he had to be obeyed for the greater glory of God in the Christian empire. One of the final entries in the collection of Gregory's correspondence is a description of the arrival in the city in April 603 of the images of Phocas and his consort, Leontia, and their reception by the pope and Senate:[123]

> the icon of the... Augusti, Phocas and Leontia, came to Rome on the seventh day before the Kalends of May (25 April), and all the clergy and Senate acclaimed them in the Lateran in the Julian basilica: 'Hear us, Christ! Life to Phocas, emperor, and to Leontia, empress.' Then the most blessed and apostolic Pope Gregory ordered the icon itself to be deposited in the oratory of Saint Caesarius, inside the royal palace.

For modern audiences, the commitment of a man like Gregory to a hierarchical and "multi-national" state like the later Roman Empire is perhaps difficult to understand. Empires, as a means for arranging political relationships between groups of peoples, are not at all fashionable today.[124] In this sense, Gregory's letters reconnect us with a world before the advent of the modern nation state. They help us to appreciate what others, far removed from ourselves, may have valued in these old empires and, indeed, what it was that bound them together. In Gregory's case, religion was the glue that held the empire together—apart from the historical events that had re-joined Italy to the provinces ruled by the emperor at Constantinople by force of arms—and particularly the notion that the Christian God had ordained a certain political order at whose apex stood a quasi-sacerdotal emperor, with a specific role to play in the unfolding of God's purposes

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[123] Appendix 8, trans. Martyn, 3:886 (CCSL 140A:1101): "Venit autem icona... Focae et Leontiae Augustorum Romae septimo Kalendarum Maiarum, et acclamatum est eis in Lateranis in basilica Iulii ab omni clero uel senatu: 'Exaudi Christe! Focae Augusto et Leontiae Augustae uita!' Tunc iussit ipsam iconam domnus beatissimus et apostolicus Gregorius papa reponi eam in oratorio sancti Caesarii intra palatio."

[124] For renewed scholarly interest in empires, see Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the politics of difference* (Princeton, NJ, 2010); Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel, *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium* (Oxford, 2009); and Herfried Münkler, *Imperien: Die Logik der Weltherrschaft vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten* (Berlin, 2005).

with humankind. Although traditional Roman religion had played a part in the political community of the classical, pre-Christian empire, by the 6th century it was Christianity that had come to explain and justify the universal authority of the emperor over all the peoples he ruled (and many of those he did not or did no longer). Yet what is truly remarkable about the period in which Gregory lived and worked is that across the broad sweep of Eurasia, from Rome to the capital of the Sasanian kings at Ctesiphon and beyond even this as far as the capital of the Chinese empire at Chang'an, the rulers of the conglomerate states we label empires were all looking to religion to cement, and somehow sacralise as never before, the authority of the ruler.[125] It was as if the art of governing had itself grown more difficult—a sentiment with which Gregory and Maurice, his emperor, patron and friend, would doubtless have concurred.

[125] See the interesting perspectives revealed in Walter Scheidel (ed.), *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires* (Oxford, 2009); and Thomas Jansen, "New Tendencies, Religious and Philosophical, in the Chinese World of the Third through Sixth Centuries," in *Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome compared*, eds Fritz-Heiner Mutschler and Achim Mittag (Oxford, 2008), pp. 397–419.

CHAPTER FOUR

GREGORY THE GREAT AND MONASTICISM

Barbara Müller

Gregory the Great is connected with some very important aspects of monasticism. His relationship with the movement of Benedict of Nursia stands at the beginning of the development of what became the very influential Benedictinism. Gregory, as the first monk to become pope, also directed ecclesiastical policy for fourteen decisive years in a manner that was, at least in part, shaped by his monastic ideals.[1] Finally, it is Gregory's numerous writings, which deal with his regulation of monastic affairs as well as his attitude to being a monk, that give a unique insight into the diverse nature of monastic life during the 6th and early 7th centuries.

Gregory the Monk in the Context of Monastic Tradition

Gregory was not the first of his family to turn towards the monastic life. He himself mentions three of his aunts on his father's side, Tarsilla, Gordiana, and Aemiliana, who lived as virgins dedicated to God according to a strict rule in their own house—presumably the family home—as a religious community.[2] Gregory's aunts, then, belong to a line of women of the Roman senatorial aristocracy that can be traced back to the second half of the 4th century, who lived mainly in the family home in a monastic fashion under a private or public vow.[3] As an example of commitment to their

[1] Despite more recent studies on Gregory and monasticism, still of outstanding importance are: Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums* (Tübingen, 1933), 2:339. More recently: Georg Jenal, *Italia ascetica atque monastica. Das Asketen- und Mönchtum in Italien von den Anfängen bis zur Zeit der Langobarden (ca. 150/250–604)* (Stuttgart, 1995), 2:827–31; Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 131–87; George E. Demacopoulos, *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (Notre Dame, IN, 2007), pp. 127–69.

[2] *HEv.* 38.15 (CCSL 141:374): "Tres pater meus sorores habuit, quae cunctae tres sacrae virgines fuerunt... Uno omnes ardore conversae, uno eodemque tempore sacratae, sub districtione regulari degentes, in domo propria socialem vitam ducebant." See also: *Dial.* 4.17 (SC 265:68–70).

[3] See Jenal, *Italia ascetica atque monastica*, 1:131–32; 266.

vocation, however, Gregory could only instance Tarsilla and Aemiliana; Gordiana's religious fervour cooled and she turned progressively towards the world and especially towards the steward of her estates—the women do not appear to have given up all their worldly goods—whom she later married.[4] The sisters appear to have prayed so intensely that the skin on Tarsilla's elbows and knees became as hard "as a camel's".[5] At much the same time as Gregory, shortly after his father's death, his mother Silvia also took up the monastic life. She entered the convent Cella Nova near the basilica of St. Paul. In doing so she chose a way of life that was, at the time, common for older aristocratic widows.

On his own conversion to the monastic life which occurred in about 574, Gregory goes into detail in only one passage in his works. In the dedication of his commentary on Job to his friend Leander of Seville, written at least twenty years after the event, Gregory describes his lengthy struggle to realize the "grace of conversion" (*conversionis gratia*).[6] Self-critically, he admits that he had too long allowed ingrown habits to restrict him (*inolta me consuetudo devinxerat*).[7] The restraining habit that he cites is his office as prefect of the city of Rome, which he had undertaken in patriotic enthusiasm combined perhaps with a certain amount of vanity. The death of his father Gordianus delivered the final impetus for giving up his worldly career and taking up the religious life.

In about 574 Gregory used the fortune of his late father to found seven monasteries, six in Sicily and one in Rome.[8] He converted his family home, at the foot of *Mons Caelius* on the *clivus Scauri*, into a Roman monastery, dedicated to St. Andrew the Apostle, and entered it himself.[9] Gregory was never the abbot of his monastery. His biographer, John the Deacon, interprets this as showing Gregory's preference for a subordinate role.[10] How many monks there were in Gregory's community is unknown. The first abbot of St. Andrew's monastery was Valentius, an abbot who had fled

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[4] *HEv.* 38:15 (CCSL 141:376).

[5] "camelorum more", *HEv.* 38:15 (CCSL 141:375); cf. *Dial.* 4.17.3 (SC 265:70); in *Dial.* 4.17.1 Gregory speaks of "virtute continuae orationis" (SC 265:68).

[6] *Mor. praef.* 1 (CCSL 143:1).

[7] *Mor. praef.* 1 (CCSL 143:1); on the Augustinian language and the corresponding parallels in content, see Claude Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand. Culture et expèrience chrétiennes* (Paris, 1977), pp. 297–98.

[8] Gregory of Tours, *HF* 10.1 (MGH SSRM 1.1:477–78).

[9] *LP* 66.5 (ed. Duchesne, 1:312). On the lay-out, appearance, and dedication of the monastery of St. Andrew, see Barbara Müller, *Führung im Denken und Handeln Gregors des Grossen* (Tübingen, 2009), pp. 27–40.

[10] "cum subesse mallet", John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* 1.6 (PL 75:65B).

to Rome from the invading Lombards.[11] Others of Gregory's fellow monks were also monastic refugees from the province of Valeria adjoining Rome to the north-east. From Gregory's scanty remarks about his brethren, we gather that the St. Andrew's monastery received established monks, even several abbots and their followers, and also various talented new converts.[12] Some of Gregory's fellows can be identified as members of the upper-classes, so T.S. Brown's description of St. Andrew's as a "fashionably aristocratic monastery" is probably accurate.[13]

The ascetic life of the monks of St. Andrew's was marked by fasting but, at least in Gregory's case, can hardly have been too rigorous.[14] The hospitality and openness that characterized the monastery of St. Andrew are evidence enough for that. Gregory and his fellow monks appear to have carried out detailed biblical studies, practising the *lectio divina*.[15] This means that based on the study of Holy Scripture they were aiming for contemplative experiences—a practice and experience which Gregory longed for later in his very busy life as pope.[16] In line with ancient monastic traditions, the monks of St. Andrew's tried to attain the *compunctio cordis* in their biblical meditations. Translated literally they were seeking the "piercing of the heart"; in a spiritual context it signified being so deeply touched by the word of God that contact with God became possible in the innermost core of one's being.[17] The monks of St. Andrew's would have been instructed in this spiritual praxis by their monastic fathers as well as from the relevant literature.[18] This consideration and also Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs—most probably composed during his first period in the monastery of St. Andrew and containing noticeable parallels to Origen's exegesis—indicate that the study of theological writings must also have formed part of the routine of the monks of St. Andrew's.[19] It is

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[11] *Dial.* 4.22.1 (SC 265:78); he was succeeded by Maximian and Peter, cf. Müller, *Führung*, pp. 45–46.

[12] On Gregory's fellow monks and his references to them, see Müller, *Führung*, pp. 45–46.

[13] Thomas S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers. Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy A.D. 554–800* (London, 1984), p. 78; cf. Jenal, *Italia ascetica*, 1:266.

[14] *Dial.* 3.33.8 (SC 260:398).

[15] See for instance Gregory, *Dial.* 4.49.2 (SC 260:168).

[16] Cf. *Dial.* 1, *Prol.* 1–5 (SC 260:10–14).

[17] A detailed discussion of "*compunctio*" is found in *Dial.* 3.34 (SC 260:400–04).

[18] Especially John Cassian, *Conlationes* 9:26–30 (CSEL 13:273–76).

[19] Cf. Susanne Müller, *"Fervorem discamus amoris". Das Hohelied und seine Auslegung bei Gregor dem Grossen* (St. Ottilien, 1991), pp. 236–38. A new, much later dating, i.e. during Gregory's pontificate, is suggested by Mark DelCogliano (trans.), *Gregory the Great. On the Song of Songs* (Collegeville, 2012), pp. 33–36. See further Scott DeGregorio's article *infra*.

hard to imagine that Gregory was alone in his study of theology. Indeed, his dedication of the homilies on Ezekiel to Bishop Mari[ni]anus of Ravenna, an ex-monk of St. Andrew's, in which Gregory quotes Augustine and Ambrose as sources, suggests that many of the monks of St. Andrew's studied theology.[20] The monastery of St. Andrew then, seems also to have been a place for theological study and learning.

Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs, that is, his exegesis of Songs 1:1–8, is based on lectures he gave in his own monastery, probably in 575–79, although he did not undertake its final editing until the turn of the century.[21] In these lectures on the Song of Songs, there is on the one hand detailed discussion of the *compunctio cordis*, and thus of the piety of the monks of St. Andrew's, sustained by the Bible. On the other hand, Gregory criticizes the ecclesiastical teachers (*magistri*) and priests (*sacerdotes*), accusing them of setting no sort of example by their way of life to the faithful committed to their charge.[22] What he demands of Church leaders, on the contrary, is an exemplary life, in particular a unity of teaching and conduct. This unity results from a combination of contemplation and service as it is expressed concretely in actions in and for the world, as well as in preaching.[23] Gregory does not explicitly mention monks in his observations on the Song of Songs, but the way in which he incorporates the ascetic and contemplative life as the breeding ground for true and correct ecclesiastical action, and at the same time criticizes the ecclesiastical leadership trapped in this world, suggests that he was thinking of a renewal of the Church in a spirit of monasticism.

What was the rule of life for the monks of St. Andrew's? Contrary to earlier scholarly theories it was not the Benedictine Rule.[24] Given the contemporary multiplicity of rules, it would have been a mixed rule (*regula mixta*). This would be a house rule composed of various regulations which had already been tried and tested in earlier monastic times and in

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[20] *HEz. praef.* (CCSL 142:3, l. 10–11). Deborah Mauskopf (*The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna* [Washington DC, 2004], pp. 42–43) identifies Marianus with the bishop Marinian, Gregory's contemporary, not the bishop of Ravenna from 546 to 556. Marinian (595–606) was possibly also the original dedicatee of the *RP*: see Bronwen Neil's chapter *supra*.

[21] Cf. Müller, "*Fervorem discamus amoris*", p. 26.

[22] *Cant.* 43 (CCSL 144:41).

[23] *Cant.* 43 (CCSL 144:42).

[24] On the earlier research into Gregory's alleged Benedictine Rule of life, see Kassius Hallinger, "Papst Gregor der Grosse und der Hl. Benedikt," in *Studia Anselmiana* 42, *Commentationes in Regulam S. Benedicti*, ed. Basilius Steidle (Rome, 1957), pp. 231–319, at pp. 231–34.

different rules, but specific to each individual monastery.[25] The era of these mixed rules (*regulae mixtae*) extended from the 4th–5th centuries into the 9th century.[26] We do not know exactly what the rule at St. Andrew's was. Gregory only twice refers explicitly to the rule of his own monastery in his writings: in one case, the phrase "the regulations of our monastery" (*monasterii nostri... regula*) means the regulations of the monastery of St. Andrew according to which the brothers live communally and are not allowed personal possessions.[27] In the other case, he is speaking of the admission of a new monk: "According to the rule he was kept waiting for a long time and finally admitted."[28] These two regulations are to be found often in early monastic rules and thus it is not possible to assign them to any specific rule.[29]

As already mentioned, various monks from the province of Valeria were among the earliest inmates of the monastery of St. Andrew. That province's rural areas made it an ideal setting for a secluded monastic life.[30] One of the monastic fathers of the province of Valeria whose personality can be sensed is Abbot Equitius of Amiterno (*c.*480/90–571). Equitius was clearly a formative influence on Valentius, Gregory's first abbot, and thus probably on the whole monastic community of St. Andrew.[31] Gregory devoted an extensive chapter of his *Dialogues* (*Dial.* 1.4) to Equitius, depicting him as a worker of miracles and a charismatic person, although acting at times at cross purposes with the institutional Church. His appearance was unpretentious and peasant-like, but he must have

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[25] Gregory's remark to Augustine, former monk of St. Andrew's and later bishop of Canterbury, "tuae fraternitas monasterii regulis erudita", in Bede, *HE* 1.27 (eds. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, Oxford Medieval Texts [Oxford, 1969], p. 80), can be interpreted to mean that the monks of St. Andrew's were familiar with various monastic rules.

[26] Cf. Hallinger, "Papst Gregor," pp. 264–65.

[27] *Dial.* 4.57.10 (SC 265:188) "... quia eisudem monasterii nostri semper regula fuerat, ut cuncti fratres ita communiter viverent, quatenus eis singulis nulla habere propria liceret."

[28] *HEv.* 38.16 (CCSL 141:376): "qui diu regulariter protractus, quandoque susceptus est."

[29] Cf. *Regula Benedicti* 58. 1–3 (CSEL 75:133): "Nobiter [sic!] veniens quis ad conversationem, non ei facilis tribuatur ingressus, sed sicut ait apostolus: Probate spiritus, si ex deo sunt." Cf. 1 John 4:1.

[30] See Peter Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages*, 2nd ed. (London, 1993), p. 135; Gregorio Penco, "Conditions and Currents in Sixth-century Italian Monasticism," *American Benedictine Review* 50 (1999), 161–79, at 169.

[31] Cf. Giacinto Marinangeli, "Equizio Amiternino e il suo movimento monastico," *Bulletino della deputazione abruzzese di storia patria* 64 (1974), 281–343; idem, "Influssi 'Equiziani' nel monastero Gregoriano *ad Clivum Scauri*?" *Bulletino della deputazione abruzzese di storia patria* 71 (1981), 57–84, at 6–465; Gregorio Penco, *Storia del monachesimo in Italia dalle origini alla fine dell Medio Evo* (Rome, 1959), pp. 23–24.

had a certain level of education.[32] According to Robert Markus, Equitius was a "free-lance preacher" who was immediately opposed by the pope because of his unauthorized preaching, an opposition which, however, was miraculously reversed.[33] Equitius' main interest, supposing that Gregory did not attribute one of his own interests to the charismatic predecessor of his Valerian fellow monks, was to inflame the hearers of his preaching with "love for their heavenly home".[34] We might therefore conclude that Gregory's notable ideal of preaching, supported by monastic contemplation, was owed partly to the formation of his fellow monks from the province of Valeria and thus ultimately to Equitius. Similarly, we may speculate about the influence Equitius had on the rule of the monastery of St. Andrew. This, however, cannot be deduced with certainty since the only information we have on Equitius, apart from his mere name, comes from Gregory's pen which makes it impossible to check or compare his description of Equitius.

The great historical success of the Benedictine Rule to some extent obstructs the recognition of other early monastic traditions and influences that decisively formed Gregory's own monastic life and thinking—and possibly even more strongly than the Benedictine ideal of the monk. In the first place, there is Gregory's friend the Spanish bishop, Leander of Seville, (*c.*540–600) with whom he spent several years in Constantinople (580–85). Leander, like Gregory, preferred the monastic life, which in his case resulted in the formulation of a rule.[35] There are echoes of Leander's Rule in Gregory's works.[36] Given the profound life-long friendship between the two men it is likely that their conversations in Constantinople would have included the monastic life as well as or in the context of the Book of Job, on which Gregory wrote a long commentary at this time and which he later sent to Leander.[37] In his manner of life Leander belongs to the category of monk-bishops: he was originally a monk who later, as bishop, acted within the entire Church but without ever forgetting his personal

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[32] *Dial.* 1.4.10 (SC 260:46): "Erat uero valde vilis in vestibus, atque ita despectus, ut si quis illum fortasse nesciret, salutatus etiam resalutare despiceret.... Semper semetipsum sacros codices in pelliciis sacculis missos dextro laevoque latere portabat...".

[33] Robert Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 67.

[34] "...corda audentium ad amorem patriae caelestis excitaret." *Dial.* 1.4.10 (SC 260:46), cf. *Dial.* 1. *Prol.* 9 (SC 260:16).

[35] Leander of Seville, *Regula de institutione uirginum*, ed. Jaime Velazquez (Madrid, 1979), pp. 97–174.

[36] For instance Leander, *Reg.* 31.1 and *Reg.* 31.10 (ed. Velazquez, p. 170; p. 173) are reminiscent of Gregory, *Mor. praef.*, 1 (CCSL 143:1) and *Dial.* 1, *Prol.* 5 (SC 260:12).

[37] See DeGregorio *infra.*

preference for the monastic life.[38] In Constantinople Gregory also met other bishops with monastic backgrounds similar to Leander's, but from the eastern Churches, especially Patriarch Eulogios of Alexandria.[39] What these men had in common was their actualization of the ideal, sketched in Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs, of an ecclesiastical leader as a contemplative and also as a preacher. In these men, who had exchanged the purely contemplative monastic life for active participation in ecclesiastical politics, Gregory found credible representatives of an ideal that he had had in mind, at least theoretically, for some time, of a life at once active and contemplative. This life he himself also led, at least after his election as bishop.

Gregory's ideal of monasticism would naturally also have been influenced by every monastic community with which he was in contact. In addition, there were the fruits of Gregory's wide reading, which can be shown to have included monastic literature such as the works of John Cassian, the *Vitae Patrum*, Theodoret's history of monasticism, and the *Vita Antonii*.[40]

Gregory the Great and Benedict of Nursia

In the *Life* of Gregory by John the Deacon in 873, we find the first description of Gregory as a Benedictine.[41] The earlier *Lives* by the Anonymous of Whitby and Paul the Deacon do not say that Gregory's community followed the *Rule* of St. Benedict. This difference among the sources mirrors the rise and establishment of the Benedictine Rule as the exclusive

[38] This is reflected, for instance, in his sermon *Homilia in laudem ecclesiae*, published in *Concilios visigoticos e hispano-romanos*, eds José Vives et al. (Barcelona, 1963), pp. 139–44, and generally in his prolonged campaign to wean the Spanish Church from Arianism. On the character of the episcopal monk, although mainly in the East, cf. Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: the Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), and Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, 2005), pp. 137–52.

[39] On Eulogios and his connection with Gregory, cf. Müller, *Führung*, pp. 93–95.

[40] John Cassian, *Conlationes*, eds Michael Petschenig and Gottfried Kreuz, 2nd ed. (Vienna, 2004); John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium uitiorum remedies*, ed. Jean-Claude Guy (Paris, 1965); *Vitae patrum sive historiae eremiticorum decem* (PL 73:89–1234); Athanasius of Alexandria, *Vita Antonii*, ed. G.J.M. Bartelink, SC 400, (Paris, 1994); Theodoret of Cyrus, *Historia religiosa*, eds Pierre Canivet and Alice Leroy-Molinghen, SC 234; SC 257 (Paris, 1977/1979). The reminiscences of these works are found especially in the *Dialogues*, cf. Joan M. Petersen, *The* Dialogues *of Gregory the Great in their Late Antique Cultural Background*, Studies and Texts 69 (Toronto, 1984), pp. 151–88.

[41] Joh. Diac., *Vita Gregorii* 4.80 (PL 75:228BC).

monastic practice in the Carolingian era. In consequence of this exclusive legitimacy, it clearly became impossible from the Carolingian era until very recently to think of Gregory the monk and biographer of Benedict as anything but a Benedictine himself. This description, however, runs counter to the historical facts, as Kassius Hallinger has already demonstrated in his trail-blazing study of Gregory and Benedict.[42] It is true that Gregory was aware of the Benedictine Rule, as can be seen in this quotation from his *Dialogues*:[43]

> With all the renown he gained by his numerous miracles, the holy man was no less outstanding for the wisdom of his teaching. He wrote a Rule for Monks that is remarkable for its discretion and its clarity of language. Anyone who wishes to know about his life and character can discover in his Rule exactly what he was like as abbot, for his life could not have differed from his teaching.

But as already mentioned, in spite of this praise of the Benedictine Rule in the *Dialogues* and notable borrowings from it in the *Regula pastoralis*, Gregory and his brethren did not live exclusively by the Benedictine Rule. We may speculate that, as in the case of Equitius, so with the Rule of St. Benedict, and certain elements of it made their way into the regulations of the monastery of St. Andrew. Even then it is incorrect to call Gregory a Benedictine.

All the same, Benedict must have been important to Gregory and his fellow monks; how else can we explain Gregory's exhaustive biography of Benedict which takes up a whole book of his *Dialogues* (*Dial.* 2)? The idea that recurs, although it never predominates among researchers, that Benedict never existed except as Gregory's literary product, invented as an ideal man of God and given a highly symbolic name "Benedictus vir" (the blessed man), appears unlikely, in spite of some stereotypical characteristics in Benedict, considering the historical reliability of Gregory's writings

[42] Hallinger, *Papst Gregor.* Most recently on Gregory and Benedict: Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, pp. 158–63.

[43] *Dial.* 2.36 (SC 260:242): "Hoc autem nolo te lateat, quod vir Dei inter tot miracula, quibus in mundo claruit, doctrinae quoque verbo non mediocriter fulsit. Nam scripsit monachorum regulam discretione praecipuam, sermone luculentam. Cuius si quis velit subtilius mores vitamque cognoscere, potest in eadem institutione regulae omnes magisterii illius actus invenire, quia sanctus vir nullo modo potuit aliter docere quam vixit." Trans. Odo John Zimmerman, *Saint Gregory the Great, Dialogues*, Fathers of the Church 39 (New York, 1959), p. 107. Whether this actually refers to the *Regula Benedicti* and not the *Master's Rule* was a subject of dispute but it has now been generally accepted, cf. Adalbert de Vogüé, Introduction, SC 251:156–57.

shown here and elsewhere.[44] There *must* have been an Umbrian monk who directed several monasteries in the valley of Subiaco during the first half of the 6th century, and in about 530 founded a monastery on Monte Cassino from which, after his death (*c.*555/560), the monks fled before the incursion of the Lombards in 585.[45] The Benedictine ideal survived the Lombard invasions in Subiaco and even longer on Monte Cassino and the monastic foundations that depended on it.[46] Gregory understood this through actual monastic personalities.[47] He names them in *Dial.* 2.2:[48]

> I know [his deeds] from the lips of four of his own disciples: Constantine, the holy man who succeeded him as abbot [at Monte Cassino]; Valentinian, for many years superior of the monastery at the Lateran; Simplicius, Benedict's second successor; and Honoratus, who is still abbot of the monastery where the man of God first lived [Subiaco].

Even in Rome, in the monastery of St. Pancras in the Lateran, there were some disciples of Benedict but not, certainly, the whole community from Monte Cassino, as some have assumed.[49] However, this gave Gregory easy access to information about the Rule of St. Benedict as well as details about his personality.

Monk and Pope

On becoming pope, Gregory moved from the monastery of St. Andrew to the Lateran palace; but there too he adhered to the monastic life.[50] He established a papal way of life structurally by decreeing that only clerics or

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[44] de Vogüé, Introduction, SC 251:157–58; 160–61; there are similar doubts about Benedict's sister Scholastica. Wansborough interprets her name as an *otium* and considers her a personification of contemplation: J. Henry Wansborough, "St. Gregory's intention in the stories of St. Scholastica and St. Benedict," *Revue bénédictine* 75 (1965), 147–48. On the other hand, Adalbert de Vogüé, "La rencontre de Benoît et de Scholastique. Essai d'interprétation," *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité* 48 (1972), 257–74, considers her a real person.

[45] Cf. Jenal, *Italia ascetica*, 1:196–203.

[46] The monastery on Monte Cassino was rebuilt in 718; cf. Jenal, *Italia ascetica*, 1:203.

[47] de Vogüé, Introduction, SC 251:158.

[48] *Dial.* 2, *Prol.* 2 (SC 260:128): "quattuor discipulis illius . . . agnovi: Constantino scilicet, reverentissimo valde viro, qui ei in monasterii regimine successit; Valentiniano quoque, qui multis annis Lateranensi monasterio praefuit; Simplicio, qui congregationem illius post eum tertius rexit; Honorato etiam, qui nunc adhuc cellae eius, in qua prius conversatus fuit, praeest." Trans. Zimmerman, Fathers of the Church 39:56.

[49] On the monastery of St. Pancras in Rome, see Jenal, *Italia ascetica*, 1:196; 1:203.

[50] Cf. *Reg.* 3.50 (CCSL 140:195).

monastics, not lay persons, were to be employed in the papal household.[51] The reason given for this measure was that those close to him would derive benefit from the papal example.[52] At the end of 590 he granted the monastery of St. Andrew a papal privilege, giving it the right in perpetuity to dispose of the extensive properties and estates which he had made over to it when he was a deacon.[53]

Gregory answered several letters of congratulation from friends on his election to the papacy by lamenting that he had thus lost the monastic life; for instance, in a letter of October 580 to Theoctista, the sister of the emperor: "For I have lost the profound joys of my peace and quiet, and I seem to have risen externally, while falling internally. Wherefore, I deplore my expulsion far from the face of my Creator."[54] According to his earliest biographer, the unnamed monastic of Whitby, Gregory even attempted flight after his election to escape the papacy.[55] Gregory's lamentations immediately after taking up his post and also in later years, and the legend of his attempted flight, form part of the image of the tragic monk doomed to worldly exile which he fostered among his monastic friends for the rest of his life. It may be assumed that Gregory willingly accepted the loss of his monastic life in exchange for being able to determine the fate of the Roman Church and thus of Rome and Italy as a whole—and perhaps to undertake reforms in a spirit of monasticism. During his pontificate Gregory occasionally mentioned his situation as a former monk. These utterances speak of longing for the monastic life. However, this longing is likely to have been for the tranquillity which was not to be had in his crowded papal routine, but could be found in the cloister. He appears to have observed and experienced the spiritual actions proper to a monk even after his consecration as bishop, at least occasionally, and one gets the impression that as he grew older he felt more and more a contradiction between tranquillity and turmoil rather than between the cloister and the world. In this sense he successfully enjoyed, even as pope,

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[51] Joh. Diac., *Vita Gregorii* 2.11 (PL 75:92A); see Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages*, p. 104.

[52] *Reg.* 5.57a (MGH Epp 1:363).

[53] *Reg. appendix* 2 (CCSL 140A:1094–95).

[54] "Alta enim quies meae gaudia perdidi et intus corruens ascendisse exterius videor. Unde mea conditoris mei facie longe expulsum deploro." *Reg.* 1.5 (CCSL 140:5; trans. Martyn, 1:122).

[55] Anonymous of Whitby, *Liber beati et laudabilis viri Gregorio papae urbis Romae de vita atque eius virtutibus*, 7, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 84–86. Colgrave puts the date of the biography in the years 704–714 (ibid., Introduction, p. 49).

the rare moments of quasi-monastic tranquillity that he valued so much. As he wrote to Theoctista, the emperor's sister:[56]

> Therefore, let us give thanks to that Spirit which lifts up the hearts that it fills, and which amid the tumult of humans creates a place of retreat in the mind, and in its presence every place is free of care for a soul feeling remorse.

As the years passed his conception of rest also expanded from the specifically monastic tranquillity to private moments of quiet contemplation and finally to a public form of rest in the shape of peace.[57] The older Gregory appears to have experienced a satisfaction from peace-making similar to that which his younger self had had from the daily monastic routine. In his personal life Gregory did not merely physically exit the monastic walls when he left the monastery of St. Andrew for the papal palace, he also broke them down in his mind, thus expanding the "place of retreat" into ecclesiastical politics.

Monastic Vocabulary[58]

As pope, Gregory seems to have described himself as *servus servorum Dei* from the beginning, as can be seen from a document dated March 591.[59] He thus introduced a contemporary monastic title into the papacy which is still used by popes today. The title is programmatic for Gregory since it expresses the aspect of service in the monastic spirit, linked to a superlative which makes the monk the highest servant of all.[60]

In the wider monastic context Gregory's vocabulary is marked by precision, beginning with a clear terminological distinction between clerics and monks.[61] Gregory mostly uses the terms *monachus* and *religiosus* or *religiosa* to describe monastics. Basically *monachus* denotes a monk bound

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[56] "Agamus ergo gratias ei spiritui qui corda quae implet levat, qui inter tumultus hominum solitudinem in mente facit, in cuius praesentia nullus locus compunctae animae non est secretus." *Reg.* 7.23 (CCSL 140:475; trans. Martyn, 2:474 modified).

[57] See *Reg.* 11.28 (CCSL 140A:917; trans. Martyn 3:774).

[58] Cf. Pietrina Pellegrini, *Militia clericatus, monachici ordines. Istituzioni eclesiastiche e società in Gregorio Magno*, 2nd ed. (Catania, 2008), pp. 149–206; with references to further literature. But Pellegrini has not covered all the terms: she does not, for instance, consider *continens*.

[59] *Reg. appendices* 1 and 2 (CCSL 140A:1092 and 1094).

[60] See Pellegrini, *Militia*, p. 164.

[61] E.g. *Reg.* 1.40 (CCSL 140:46; trans. Martyn, 1:159); *Reg.* 4.11 (CCSL 140:229; trans. Martyn, 1:296).

to a particular monastery by its rule, typically a coenobite.[62] The term *religiosus* or *religiosa* is more difficult to define. *Religiosi* might lead their ascetic life in a monastic setting, in which case they were also *monachi* or *monachae*, honoured for their religious fervour with the title *religiosus* or *religiosa*.[63] *Religiosi* might also live a pious ascetic life outside the cloister.[64] In general, however, *religiosi* were closer to the regular monastic life than to the life of a God-fearing lay person.[65]

Most of the monks mentioned by Gregory lived in monastic communities; only a few were hermits. Gregory calls this solitary life the *vita solitaria*,[66] and *vita eremetica*,[67] and the ones who led it *inclausus*[68] or *solitarius*.[69] Monastic communities, whether of men or women, were *congregationes* in the Gregorian terminology.[70] Their superiors were called *abbas* for the men[71] and *abbatissa* or *mater* for the women.[72] The abbot, who may also have been called *rector*,[73] and the abbess, who both directed the community in all affairs, were responsible for the spiritual and material life of the monks and for all the business of the monastery.[74] The assistants of these monastic superiors were the overseers, the *praepositus* or *praeposita*, whose tasks differed depending on whether the monastic institution was for men or for women, since the external affairs of nunneries were handled by clerics.[75] Ordinary monks without special duties were called *monachus*; the same coenobitic life is presupposed in such terms as *exmonachus, monachus veteranus, monachus puer, discipulus,*

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62 Pellegrini, *Militia*, p. 152.

63 For instance, in *Reg.* 9.87 (CCSL 140A:641; trans. Martyn, 2:596) the *ancilla Dei*, that is the nun, Adeodata, is described as *religiosa*.

64 For instance, Gregory's friend Narses in Constantinople was one such *religiosus* who did not live in a monastery, although he was a patron of monasteries: *Reg.* 7.27 (CCSL 140A:483–84; trans. Martyn, 2:481V82); cf. *Reg.* 11.17 (CCSL 140A:886; trans. Martyn 3:752).

65 Cf. Pellegrini, *Militia*, p. 154.

66 E.g. *Reg.* 9.148 (CCSL 140A:699; trans. Martyn, 2:631).

67 E.g. *Dial.* 4.16.1 (SC 265:62).

68 E.g. *Reg.* 11.55 (CCSL 140A:959; trans. Martyn, 3:801).

69 E.g. *Reg.* 11.15 (CCSL 140A:882; trans. Martyn, 3:750).

70 E.g. *Reg.* 1.39 (CCSL 140:45; trans. Martyn, 1:159); *Reg.* 3.17 (CCSL 140:164; trans. Martyn, 1:247).

71 E.g. *Reg.* 2.38 (CCSL 140:124; trans. Martyn, 1:216). More references in Pellegrini, *Militia*, p. 158.

72 E.g. *Reg.* 1.46 (CCSL 140:60; trans. Martyn, 1:172); *Dial.* 4.14.5 (SC 265:58).

73 E.g. *Reg.* 1.39 (CCSL 140:45; trans. Martyn, 1:159).

74 Pellegrini, *Militia*, pp. 158–60, referring to "abbas".

75 E.g. *Reg.* 5.4 (CCSL 140:269; trans. Martyn, 2:325); *Reg.* 4.9 (CCSL 140:225; trans. Martyn, 1:293); cf. Pellegrini, *Militia*, pp. 160–61 and 169. Monasteries also sometimes had an additional person outside who dealt with external administrative affairs, e.g. *Reg.* 1.67 (CCSL 140:76; trans. Martyn, 1:181–83).

filius, famulus Dei, servi Domini nostri, and *frater* which may carry particular nuances and qualifications.[76] The only exceptions were monks who were also clerics and able to perform internally the priestly offices necessary for the monastery. For such persons Gregory adds the clerical title to the monastic one and speaks of *presbyter* and *monachus.*[77] Female inmates of convents were usually described as *ancilla Dei.*[78]

Regulation of Monastic Affairs

According to a statement by Gregory in June 597, he had the care of 3000 monastic institutions.[79] Consequently, in the course of his pontificate, he determined innumerable monastic affairs, ranging from routine problems to special cases, as can be seen from his descriptions and regulations in the *Registrum.*

Gregory's administrative proceedings were marked in the main by his endeavour to decide correctly and in accordance with the law. This is how he and his ecclesiastical collaborators acted in monastic contexts as well—at least, normally. A blatant exception was Gregory's dealings with his friend the *patricius* Venantius, who lived in Sicily but whose influence extended from the Frankish kingdom to Constantinople.[80] Venantius had broken his monastic vows and married. Gregory rebuked him but did not impose any sanctions for the breaking of the oath.[81] For lesser persons, leaving their monastery would result in a forcible return and possibly a punitive sojourn in a different monastery.[82] This did not happen to Venantius: in fact, when he was ill, Gregory offered to let Venantius assume his monk's robe again on his death-bed so that he would be judged more leniently for his broken oath at the Last Judgment.[83]

What were Gregory's criteria in regulating monastic affairs? In the first place there were the imperial laws, especially Justinian's *Corpus iuris civilis,* and among them most particularly Novella 123, "On the most holy and

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[76] Cf. Pellegrini, *Militia,* pp. 161–66.

[77] E.g. *Reg.* 9.18 (CCSL 140A:578; trans. Martyn, 2:556).

[78] E.g. *Reg.* 5.4 (CCSL 140:269; trans. Martyn, 2:325); for other less common terms for nuns, cf. Pellegrini, *Militia,* pp. 169–71.

[79] *Reg.* 7.23 (CCSL 140:477; trans. Martyn, 2:476).

[80] Gregory similarly shielded Venantius' wife Italica, cf. *Reg.* 3.57 (CCSL 140:205–06; trans. Martyn, 1:277–78).

[81] *Reg.* 1.33 (CCSL 140:39–40; trans. Martyn, 1:152–54).

[82] E.g. *Reg.* 8.8 (CCSL 140A:525–26; trans. Martyn, 2:506–07).

[83] *Reg.* 11.25 (CCSL 140A:895–96; trans. Martyn, 3:758).

most God-pleasing and most venerable bishops and clerics and monks."[84] Obedience to the imperial laws was the minimum acceptable to Gregory, especially if a legal dispute went beyond the narrow ecclesiastical boundaries.[85] He usually based his judgments on both secular and ecclesiastical laws, on *leges* as well as *canones*.[86] In cases where ecclesiastical laws differed from the secular, Gregory pronounced in favour of the former, as in the case of the husband of Agathosa who had taken up the monastic life against the wishes of his wife. This was permissible under secular law but the *lex divina* required the agreement of the spouse: "For although secular law provides that a marriage can be broken for the sake of conversion, against the wish of either party, yet divine law does not allow this to happen."[87]

The extent of ecclesiastical legal criteria in Gregory's time is still unclear. There were not only papal decretals and decisions of councils, but also biblical precepts, sayings of the fathers and the rules of individual monastic communities.[88] In the monastic context, the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 concerning monasticism, to which Gregory had access in the Latin translation by Dionysius Exiguus, were especially important.[89]

Gregory was well versed in legal matters and, as previously noted, endeavoured to adhere to existing law. He reacted immediately therefore, when in 593 Emperor Maurice, modifying the Justinian precept, restricted access to the monastic life by decree.[90] The law, which has not been preserved, forbade Maurice's soldiers to take up the monastic life and forbade civil servants to do the same or to become clerics.[91] Maurice's

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[84] "De sanctissimis et Deo amabilibus et reverentissimis episcopis et clericis et monachis": *Corpus iuris civilis*, vol. 3: *Novellae*, eds Rudolf Schöll et al., 9th ed. (Dublin—Zurich, 1968), pp. 593–625. On other collections of laws used by Gregory see Pellegrini, *Militia*, pp. 210–11. See also Giuseppe Damizia, "Il *Registrum epistolarum* di S. Gregorio Magno ed il *Corpus Juris Civilis*," *Benedictina* 2 (1948), 195–226.

[85] E.g. *Reg.* 9.48 (CCSL 140A:607; trans. Martyn, 2:574–75).

[86] E.g. *Reg.* 7.35 (CCSL 140:498; trans. Martyn, 2:491), cf. Pellegrini, *Militia*, pp. 211–12.

[87] "... etsi mundane lex praecipit conversionis gratia utrolibet invite solvi posse coniugium, divina haec lex fieri non permittit." *Reg.* 11.30 (CCSL 140A:918; trans. Martyn, 3:755); *divina lex* refers to Matt. 19:6.

[88] Pellegrini, *Militia*, pp. 216–28.

[89] *Conc. Calc. a. 451*, *can.* 4 (ACO 2,2,2:88); *can.* 24 (ACO 2,2,2:92). On Gregory's use of the canons of Chalcedon see Leo Ueding, "Die Kanones von Chalcedon in ihrer Bedeutung für Mönchtum und Klerus," in *Das Konzil von Chalcedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 2, eds Aloys Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht (Würzburg, 1954), pp. 569–676, at pp. 648–58.

[90] The emperor changed the provisions of *Novell. Iust.* 5.2 (*Corpus iuris civilis*, 3:29), in which access to the monastic life was described as open to all.

[91] Gregory's letters on this subject: *Reg.* 3.61 (CCSL 140:209; trans. Martyn, 1:280–82); *Reg.* 3.64 (CCSL 140:214–15; trans. Martyn, 2:285–86); *Reg.* 8.10 (CCSL 140A:527–27; trans. Martyn, 2:508).

object in this decree was probably not so much to stem the flow into the cloisters as to make it impossible for soldiers and civil servants with professional or financial problems to seek refuge in a monastery and thus escape their temporal responsibilities. Gregory, who did not lack understanding for pragmatic proceedings, recognized and accepted this reason for preventing civil servants from becoming clerics. However, he harshly criticized the provisions concerning monasticism in the new law since, in his eyes, Christians who were honestly seeking the monastic life were being barred from the cloister and their striving for salvation hampered. Gregory bluntly reminded the emperor of the seriousness of the guilt he was assuming with his law and described in detail how he would have to face Christ, the judge, who would call him to account for prohibiting entry to the monastic life.[92]

Gregory countered the argument that the army would be weakened by an influx of soldiers into the monasteries by pointing out that the recent victory over the Persians had been primarily due to the emperor's prayer and not to the engagement of the soldiers.[93] Gregory acknowledged that postulant monks could resolve financial problems by entering a monastery and that their motives might therefore not be purely, or at least not primarily, religious and suggested a compromise:[94] namely that postulant civil servants or soldiers must put their financial affairs in order before entering the monastery and that they could only become monks after three years' probation.[95] In this transitional period Gregory believed it would be possible to sort out the black sheep among the aspiring monks, while the honest candidates could legitimately be accepted into the monastic community. It seems that the emperor accepted this compromise. A letter of the year 600 shows that, in the case of a soldier who wished to enter a monastery in the diocese of Naples, Gregory insisted on his obtaining official papal permission, which means that such cases were in practice regulated centrally in Rome.[96]

Gregory meticulously supervised the lawful functions of the monasteries. He was especially concerned that bishops should exercise their oversight

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[92] *Reg.* 3.61 (CCSL 140:210; trans. Martyn, 1:282). On this law, see also Matthew Dal Santo's article in this volume.

[93] *Reg.* 3.64 (CCSL 140:214–15; trans. Martyn, 1:285).

[94] *Reg.* 3.61 (CCSL 140:210; trans. Martyn, 1:285): "aut interpretando pietas vestra, aut immutando vigorem eiusdem legis inflectat"; "... let your Piety reduce the force of the law by interpretation, or by alternation".

[95] *Reg.* 8.10 (CCSL 140A:527; trans. Martyn, 2:508).

[96] *Reg.* 10.9 (CCSL 140A:835–36; trans. Martyn, 3:720).

over the monasteries correctly and not misuse their power by interfering in their internal affairs, or actively conniving with those who disputed the claim of a monastery to lands to which it was entitled.[97] Gregory received reports of these and other irregularities from his administrative assistants on the spot and acted immediately on such reports and also on complaints from anyone affected by illegal occurrences. For instance, he ordered Bishop Januarius of Cagliari to appoint administrators for the convents in Sardinia so that the nuns would not continually need to deal with secular matters and thus with the affairs of men.[98] He also took up the case of a nun in Naples who had been raped by a soldier.[99] As well, he organized material support for monasteries and their inmates in a non-bureaucratic and speedy manner. Such effort on behalf of the material well-being of the monasteries is also the reason why bishops and other clerics were intentionally sent to expiate their sins in the poorer monasteries, which then received financial subsidies for sheltering the offenders.[100]

Gregory showed no mercy if he learned of unlawful practices in monasteries; the reported transgressions are varied. Examples include a nun in Palermo who practiced simony, giving away articles belonging to the convent to buy herself the post of prioress.[101] The Sardinian nuns mentioned earlier, who frequently left their convent because of their bishop's neglect of his duty of care, were apparently sometimes involved in fornication.[102] On Capri there was an investigation into whether the monks were indeed guilty of criminal activities.[103] In the St. Vitus monastery at the foot of Mount Etna, the monks were living together with women.[104] Monks and nuns who broke their vows were singled out for punishment.[105]

In cases where punishment was warranted, Gregory would generally intervene indirectly by ordering the relevant authorities—in other words, the bishops—to exercise their neglected duty of oversight over the monasteries. In particular circumstances, however, Gregory would also intervene directly, for instance in 602 when he objected to the election of the

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[97] E.g. *Reg.* 1.9 (CCSL 140:11; trans. Martyn, 1:127–28); *Reg.* 2.50 (CCSL 140:141; trans. Martyn, 1:229).

[98] *Reg.* 4.9 (CCSL 140:225; trans. Martyn, 1:293).

[99] *Reg.* 14.10 (CCSL 140A:1079–80; trans. Martyn, 3:876).

[100] "in monasterio mittendus [Paulus episcopus] est...": *Reg.* 12.10 (CCSL 140A:983; trans. Martyn, 3:817).

[101] *Reg.* 5.4 (CCSL 140:269; trans. Martyn, 2:325).

[102] *Reg.* 4.9 (CCSL 140:225–26; trans. Martyn, 1:293).

[103] *Reg.* 13.47 (CCSL 140A:1056; trans. Martyn, 3:862).

[104] *Reg.* 14.17 (CCSL 140A:1090–91; trans. Martyn, 3:883).

[105] *Reg.* 8.8 (CCSL 140A:525–26; trans. Martyn, 2:506–507).

new abbot of Sts. John and Stephen *in Classe* and demanded that Bishop John of Ravenna should instead install and consecrate the *cellararius* Maurus.[106] There were also cases which he was obliged to settle himself, like the granting of privileges to newly established monasteries.[107]

The abbots and abbesses were primarily responsible for the internal affairs of their communities. What Gregory expected of an abbot, over and above strict legality, can be gathered from a letter he wrote in October 600 to Abbot Conon of Lerins. In it he described the abbot's duty of leadership as follows: "The concern of those in authority is the security of their subjects, because the person who watches over something entrusted to him avoids the snares of the enemy."[108] Gregory praises Conon for his responsible vigilance (*vigilantia, custodia*) in his relations with the brethren; he should even increase it to ward off from the brethren the attacks of the adversary which result in the spread of gluttony, avarice, evil-speaking, and impurity. These vices must be met with a wise balance of strictness and love. In a medical metaphor he exhorts Conon not to press the iron too heavily on the wounds and not to be too strict; his mildness, however, must not become a false leniency.[109] Gregory's idea of abbatial leadership here and also in other contexts appears very general and noticeably similar to his demands on future and actual clerics in the *Regula pastoralis*. We may conclude that Gregory considered the function of the abbot in his community to be the same as that of a bishop among the Christians in his diocese. In this sense, this *Regula pastoralis* can be seen as at least partly designed to encourage the very often reluctant ascetics to undergo ordination in order to fill what Gregory saw as "the pastoral void" in the Church.[110]

This mirrors the general place and importance which Gregory accorded to the monasteries within the Church. For him, they were primarily places and communities where the Christian life was lived and were thus not fundamentally different from other Christian environments. Of course, there was more likelihood of encountering committed Christians inside rather than outside the cloister, which made the abbots and monks potentially more appealing to Gregory as Church leaders.

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[106] Greg. Mag., *Reg.* 12.6 (CCSL 140A:974–75; trans. Martyn, 3:810–11).

[107] E.g. *Reg.* 13.5 (CCSL 140A:997; trans. Martyn, 3:826).

[108] "Praepositorum sollicitudo subiectorum cautela est, quia, qui super rem creditam vigilat, hostis insidias declinat." *Reg.* 11.9 (CCSL 140A:871; trans. Martyn, 3:743).

[109] *Reg.* 11.9 (CCSL 140A:871–72; trans. Martyn, 3:743–44).

[110] George E. Demacopoulos (trans.), Introduction, in: *St. Gregory, The Book of Pastoral Rule*, (Crestwood, NY, 2007), p. 15.

As shown above, Gregory made a clear distinction in his nomenclature between monastics and non-monastics, whether clerics or lay persons. Correspondingly, he also opted in various letters for a strict division between the tasks of monastics and of clerics, as in this one to Maximian of Syracuse: "Thus the ecclesiastical order would impede the monastic life, and in turn the rule of monasticism would also impede the ecclesiastical benefits."[111]

There is probably some criticism of clerics' tendency to become entangled in legal affairs in Gregory's warning that monks should avoid "forensic disputes".[112] While they were not in any sense officially both monks and clerics, we know that there were a number of monks who permanently or occasionally performed duties in the Church. Gregory was in principle reluctant to disturb the monastic tranquillity of monks, but he also had obvious sympathy for clerics from the monasteries and did not always refuse the employment of monks in the Church. In the course of his pontificate he promoted several former monks to important posts in the Church, beginning with his former brethren in the monastery of St. Andrew, his "kitchen cabinet".[113] He entrusted high ecclesiastical office to some of these ex-monks: Peter, who was both monk and deacon, became Gregory's deputy in Sicily at the outset of his papacy, Maximian became bishop of Syracuse, Marinian bishop of Ravenna, and Augustine bishop of Canterbury. Others also, who had not been members of the monastery of St. Andrew, were given special ecclesiastical commissions, as for instance to Abbot Urbicus the determination of the amount of damages payable for ecclesiastical excesses against the Jews,[114] to Abbot Probus the very delicate diplomatic duty of concluding a peace treaty with the Lombards,[115] and to Abbot Kyriakos the mission to Sardinia.[116] These instances show that Gregory put such great faith in monks that even his promotion of his monastic friends should not be considered primarily or purely as nepotism.

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[111] "...sicque invicem et ecclesiasticus ordo vitae monachicae, et ecclesiasticis utilitatibus regula monachatus impediat." *Reg.* 4.11 (CCSL 140:229; trans. Martyn, 1:296). He asserted a similar principle in his letter to John of Ravenna, *Reg.* 5.1 (CCSL 140:266; trans. Martyn, 2:323).

[112] *litigiis foralibus*: *Reg.* 1.67 (CCSL 140:76). Martyn's suggested translation "the state's legal system" (1:182) does not make much sense.

[113] Jeffrey Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476–752* (London, 1979), p. 305.

[114] *Reg.* 9.38 (CCSL 140A:597; trans. Martyn, 2:568–69).

[115] *Reg.* 9.44 (CCSL 140A:602–603; trans. Martyn, 2:571–72).

[116] *Reg.* 4.32 (CCSL 140:241–42; trans. Martyn, 1:304–305).

Such commissions also came with dangers for those who undertook them successfully. In a personal letter to Augustine, Gregory admonishes him about his miracle working.[117] He warns him not to take credit for the gift of miracles with which he had been favoured or to fall into the sin of pride. As in an important passage in the *Dialogues*, so in his letter to Augustine Gregory bases his summons to recognize God's grace on John 5:17.[118] Even so, Gregory recommends Augustine to the Anglo-Saxon king Æthelbert as a sort of mouthpiece of God.[119]

In the beginning at least, before Gregory was better informed on the ecclesiastical politics and religious circumstances in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom, the mission to the Anglo-Saxons was conducted according to the thaumaturgical concepts of the *Dialogues*. Although it was in consequence rooted in the monastic spirit, the endeavours of Gregory's missionaries in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom encountered opposition, in particular from local Christians who belonged to the Celtic and therefore largely monastically oriented Church, which had different ideas about the Christian life. This is shown by passages in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*.[120] Gregory's *Libellus responsionum*, containing his answers to the questions of his missionary Augustine, who seems to have come under fire from other Christians, indicates that Augustine's and Gregory's ecclesiology gave offence to the local Christians, moulded by another form of monasticism, both in matters of penitence and purity and also in the administration of Church property.[121] From Gregory's answers to Augustine and from other comments about the mission to the Anglo-Saxons, it is clear that in his missionary venture into the Anglo-Saxon kingdom he was primarily interested, with his characteristic adaptability, in implanting the Roman

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[117] *Reg.* 11.36 (CCSL 140A:925–29; trans. Martyn, 3:779–82).

[118] *Reg.* 11.36 (CCSL 140A:930–31; trans. Martyn, 3:783); *Dial.* 1.7.6 (SC 260:70).

[119] *Reg.* 11.37 (CCSL 140A:930–31; trans. Martyn, 3:783).

[120] Bede, *HE* 2.1 (eds Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 134–36).

[121] The *Libellus* is recorded in Bede, *HE* 1.27 (eds Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 78–102). On the history and content of the *Libellus* see Paul Meyvaert, "Bede's Text of the *Libellus Responsionum* of Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury," in *England before the Conquest: Studies presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, eds Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 15–33; idem, "Le *libellus responsionum* à Augustin de Canterbéry: un oeuvre authentique de saint Grégoire le grand," in *Grégoire le grand*. Chantilly, Centre culturel Les Fontaines, 15–19 septembre 1982, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 543–49; Müller, *Führung*, pp. 341–60.

ecclesiastical system in England rather than importing his monastic ideals. Here, as elsewhere, monasticism had to serve the Church in general.[122]

The Monastic Ideal in Gregory's Literary Works

Does the above conclusion, which has been drawn mainly from cases that can be reconstructed from Gregory's letters, correspond with Gregory's statements on the function and value of the monastic life in his literary works? Such a comparison is difficult since Gregory, as previously remarked, does not explicitly mention monks and monasteries in his works, except in the *Dialogues* and the illustrative narratives in his gospel homilies. The question cannot, therefore, be answered directly by examining the technical monastic terms such as monk (*monachus*), monastic life (*vita monastica*), and monastery (*monasterium*), but must be approached indirectly by looking for related terms and for elements of the monastic life.

A term clearly related to technical monastic terms is the description of monastics as the "abstinent" (*continentes*). This includes the celibate and thus also monastics. In his homilies on Ezekiel, Gregory sketches three "classes of believers" (*fidelium ordines*), consisting of the "class of preachers" (*ordo praedicantium*), that of "the abstinent" (*continentium*), and that of "the virtuous wedded" (*bonorum coniugum*), as exemplified by Noah (preacher), Daniel (abstinent), and Job (wedded).[123] Gregory considers the three classes equal in value since all three work towards the same end, which is the blissful unity in Christ that can be reached by any of the three ways of life.[124] In the temporal order, however, Gregory finds a "great difference in virtues of individuals",[125] and consequently a hierarchy, as can be seen from the question he poses: "For since the excellence of the preachers is a long way from that of the celibate and the silent, and the eminence of the celibates is far removed from that of the married, why is it that the three are of one measure?"[126] So the imitators of Noah—who

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[122] On the mission to the Anglo-Saxons, see further Christina Ricci's article in this volume.

[123] *HEz.* 2.4.5 (CCSL 142:261–62), referring to Ezek. 14:14, cf. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism* (as in n. 1), pp. 156–57.

[124] *HEz.* 2.4.6 (CCSL 142:263).

[125] "in eis meritorum magna est diversitas", *HEz.* 2.4.6 (CCSL 142:262).

[126] "Cum enim longe sit a continentibus et tacentibus excellentia praedicatorum, et valde a coniugatis distet eminentia continentium, quid est quod una mensura dicitur trium?" *HEz.* 2.4.6 (CCSL 142:262; trans. Theodosia Gray, *Homilies of St. Gregory the Great on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* [Etna, CA, 1990], p. 197).

for Gregory is the type of the ecclesiastical office-bearer as both preacher and director—are the most worthy in ecclesiastical though not in eschatological terms. Gregory sees the advantage of the imitators of Noah in the fact that they not only live a life free from transgression, they lead others to the faith and keep them from sinning.[127] The way of life of preachers and directors—that is, of clerics—although they form a distinct class, is not completely separate from that of the abstinent who are mainly the monastics. In the passage quoted above, Gregory explicitly couples abstinence with silence in describing the *continentes*.[128] The preachers who are also ecclesiastical administrators may conversely be described as abstinent but not silent, monks who are active in the world. Their way of life is blended, partly worldly but always abstinent according to the monastic model. The abstinent who are not silent move between the poles of the *vita activa*, engaging with the world, and the *vita contemplativa*, striving for the vision of God which in this life is most easily attained by monastics. Gregory describes the *vita contemplativa* as follows: "Truly the contemplative life is to hold fast with the whole mind, at least to the charity of God, our neighbour, but to abstain from external action."[129] Gregory sees biblical types of this way of life in Leah and Martha, as contrasted with Rachel and Mary.[130] Using these figures as a starting point enables Gregory to criticize the purely contemplative life:[131]

> Then Rachel was a seer, and sterile, Leah truly purblind, but fertile, Rachel beautiful and barren, because the contemplative life is splendid in the spirit but, whereas it seeks to rest in silence, it does not produce sons from preaching. It sees and does not bring forth, because in zeal for its quiet life it is less kindled in the collection of others, and does not suffice to reveal to others by preaching how much it inwardly perceives.

In his class of preachers (*ordo praedicatorum*), whose way of life moves between the active and contemplative, Gregory shaped a third, blended way of life which is, however, still rooted in the monastic contemplative way.

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[127] Ibid. [*HEz.* 2.4.6 (CCSL 142:262).]

[128] *continentibus et tacentibus*: *HEz.* 2.4.6 (CCSL 142:262).

[129] "Contemplativa vero vita est caritatem quidam Dei proximi tota mente retinere, sed ab exteriore actione quiescere..." *HEz.* 2.2.8 (CCSL 142:230; trans. Gray, p. 174).

[130] *HEz* 2.2.9–10 (CCSL 142:230–32), cf. *Reg.* 1.5 (CCSL 140:6; trans. Martyn, 1:123).

[131] "Erat Rachel videns, et sterilis, Lia vero lippa, sed fecunda, Rachel pulchra et infecunda, quia contemplativa vita speciosa est in animo, sed dum quiescere in silentio appetit, filios non generat ex praedicatione. Videt et non parit, quia quietis suae studio, minus se in aliorum collectione succendit, et quantum introrsus conspicit, aperire aliis praedicando non sufficit." *HEz.* 2.2.10 (CCSL 142:231–32; trans. Gray, p. 176).

For it is from contemplation that the blended way of life receives its stimulus for proclamation and for taking an active part in shaping secular affairs. Gregory himself exemplifies the fact that this contemplative monastic anchor does not necessitate a physical location in a monastery.[132] The concentrated orientation towards God and the occasional act of contemplation are decisive, and these can also occur, if not as easily, outside the cloister. The achievement of this way of life, which seems from the outside only intermittently monastic, appears to be very difficult so that one may guess—as is confirmed by the material in the *Registrum* and other works of Gregory—that for Gregory the ideal representative of the order of preachers and directors—in fact, the bishop—is a former monk. Combining what he has to say about the three orders of believers in his descriptions of the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*, we conclude that for Gregory the monastic life ranked ecclesiastically lower in this world than the clerical preaching life. But since ecclesiastical preachers receive their spiritual nourishment from contemplation, it comes to them from monastic spiritual practice. Gregory thus promoted the ideal of a monastic lifestyle in the world, although it was not legally recognized. He who follows this way of life will always be torn between the two poles of world and cloister. He shares this division, however, with those who opt for a purely contemplative way of life which can be followed only incompletely in this life, since its pure form is only to be found in the beyond.

More about Gregory's attitude to the monastic life can be deduced if one looks for words and expressions which are traditionally, and therefore most probably in his case also, connected with aspects of the monastic life. One such, which has already been considered in the context of the understanding of Scripture by the monks of St. Andrew's, is *compunctio cordis*, an effect that is typically associated with the *lectio divina* as practised in monastic settings.[133] By holding this up as an ideal in his commentary on the Song of Songs and elsewhere, Gregory promoted the use of Holy Scripture associated with monastic concentration and readiness to be pervaded by the biblical message. This confirms the observation made several times already that Gregory was concerned to stimulate the Church in general with an infusion of monastic spirit.

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[132] Cf. *Mor. praef.* (CCSL 143:2), where he describes how, when in Constantinople, he was again vexed by secular anxieties, his brethren—by their prayers and thus by their monastic life—held him fast as if by an anchor cable (*quasi anchorae fune*).

[133] Cf. especially John Cassian, *Conlationes* 9, 23–30 (CSEL 13:273–76).

Other typically monastic terms are used prominently in the *Regula pastoralis*. The second part of this text, which deals with the way of life of the director or superintendent, includes a chapter under the rubric, "That the spiritual director be discerning in silence and profitable in speech".[134] Gregory here places priestly preaching on a lower level than the typical monastic virtue of "discernment" (*discretio*). *Discretio* is the gift of distinguishing which allows a person to understand a situation correctly and react suitably to it.[135] This is the virtue which particularly distinguishes the master in spirituality or the abbot from the newcomers to monasticism, whose understanding and actions are still distorted by secular models. *Discretio* is typically described in the Benedictine Rule as "the mother of all virtues" and was required as the characteristic qualification for an abbot.[136] The third part of Gregory's *Regula pastoralis*, which is devoted to the various ways in which persons of different kinds are to be admonished, assumes this fundamental ability to distinguish; in fact, it develops what was merely a general remark in *Regula pastoralis* 2.4. Overall Gregory's profile of the (ecclesiastical) leader as seen in the *Regula pastoralis* is reminiscent of the Benedictine Rule, which he certainly knew, but also draws on other monastic sources, especially John Cassian and Caesarius of Arles.[137] Dividing the sources Gregory used to form the mosaic of his *Regula pastoralis* between patristic and monastic ones is a questionable undertaking since the monastic sources contain numerous ideas and formulations by authors who cannot be defined as narrowly monastic. It is true that, when reading the *Regula pastoralis*, one is strongly reminded of the Benedictine Rule; Gregory's characterization of a leader in this work is strikingly similar to that of an abbot in the Benedictine Rule. It does not follow, however, that Gregory when writing the *Regula pastoralis* preferentially aligned himself with the Benedictine Rule. Gregory, like Benedict, was drawing on the general spiritual traditions of his age and thus came to formulate principles that monastic authors also affirmed. Unlike Benedict, however, Gregory characteristically combines monastic and general ecclesiastical elements, demanding that the ways of life and teachings of leaders

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[134] "Ut sit rector discretius in silentio, utilis in verbo", *RP* 2.4 (SC 381:186), trans. Demacopoulos, *The Book of Pastoral Rule*, p. 54. On ascetic language in the *RP* see Demacopoulos, ibid., pp. 20–23.

[135] See further Carole Straw, "Gregory's Moral Theology", *infra*.

[136] *matris virtutum*: *Regula Benedicti* 64.19 (CSEL 75:151).

[137] Cf. Judic, Introduction, pp. 61–62.

in the Church should be based on monastic virtues and practices. In this regard Gregory also goes beyond the immediate scope of monasticism.

This is again shown by the term *regula* which he uses in the title of his *Regula pastoralis*. Examining Gregory's various uses of the term *regula* in his different works, one discovers a wide variety of meanings.[138] Most notably, Gregory does not use this term, which had already accumulated a number of meanings over time, only in the sense of a monastic rule. In fact his understanding of "rule" includes everything that makes for good order as measured by Christ. This includes "the rule of truth" as well as ecclesiastical and civil laws. At the same time he uses the term *regula* most commonly in monastic contexts, so that we may conclude that he felt that the Christian standard of discipleship was most perfectly achievable in a monastic context. But Gregory's use of the concept of a monastic rule does not promote a rigid standard; he was concerned to show the advantages of a life guided by such a standard. This is shown in exemplary form in his portrayal of Benedict of Nursia, which takes up 38 chapters of his *Dialogues*, where the rule is mentioned in a single paragraph in one chapter.[139] The actual deeds of Benedict and the teachings which he addressed to named persons clearly seemed better suited to inspire imitation than a longer description of the abstract standards of the rule.

When Gregory called his work on leadership *Regula pastoralis*, he was using a term that had a strong monastic connotation in his vocabulary, and applying it to the Church in general. Given the similarities between the *Pastoral Rule* and monastic traditions, and also its links to specific clerical actions such as the consecration of bishops, the office as Gregory sketches it in the *Regula pastoralis* can best be filled by someone who has been a monk.[140] In this work, which outlines Gregory's objectives, he again demonstrates his preference for those who embody monastic virtues even though they may not actually be monks. The conspicuous vagueness of the ecclesiological terminology in the *Regula pastoralis*—bishops and priests are only infrequently mentioned—is intended to allow candidates from the monasteries access to ecclesiastical office, without necessarily having ascended the ladder of a clerical career.[141] By the principles of leadership formulated in his *Pastoral Rule* Gregory made it possible for

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138 Cf. Müller, *Führung*, p. 143.

139 *Dial.* 2.36 (SC 260:242).

140 Müller, *Führung*, p. 144; cf. George Demacopoulos' chapter *infra*.

141 On Gregory's selection of clerics and promoting ascetics see Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, pp. 131–34.

monastic elements to penetrate the clerical order, again without expressly naming them. In spite of its title, the *Regula pastoralis* is a standard that points beyond the closed monastic community and has in its sights pastoral ministry for the whole Church.

Summary

To describe Gregory the Great as "the monk pope" requires some qualification since his attitude to monasticism was certainly generally positive, but could be quite complex in detail.[142] His positive attitude to the monastic life does not need much discussion since he had chosen this way of life for himself. Until the end of his life, Pope Gregory mourned the loss of monastic tranquillity, although in the course of his pontificate he found portions of time in which he could enjoy it, and he also experienced a similar satisfaction in achieving peaceful conditions in the Church.

Even so, the monastic life was always a matter close to Gregory's heart. This can be seen as much in his regulation of monastic affairs as in his ecclesiastical politics. He was continually concerned to protect the monasteries, the monks and nuns, urging the bishops who were responsible for them according to ecclesiastical law to do their duty in monitoring and supervising. At the same time, Gregory did not give the monastic communities any preferential treatment, and their affairs did not occupy an inordinately large part of his papal activities. Both Gregory's administrative attention and the standards he enforced in his monastic policy were in strict accord with the contemporary legal framework.

However, Gregory's ecclesiology—both theoretical and in practice—was strongly marked by monasticism. On the one hand, he urged spiritual virtues and practices on his clerics that are clearly rooted in the monastic life, as for instance *lectio divina* and *compunctio cordis*, or *discretio*. On the other hand the interchangeability between the monastic life and clerical activities—which was both structurally and practically observable—shows that Gregory preferred to recruit his ecclesiastical officials from the monasteries. In this world he considered the blended life, consisting of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, the most useful—more meritorious because of its social dimension even than the totally enclosed and silent life in the monastery. According to this significant conclusion, Gregory's

[142] Cf. Jenal, *Italia ascetica*, 2:30–31.

ideal would have been a monastic life outside the cloister, or a life dedicated to the Church in general but connected with a monastic life. This shows that, for Gregory, complete monastic tranquillity was ultimately only attainable in the beyond, making the monastic life in this world seem as imperfect to him as that of married persons. Given the eschatological quality which Gregory thus ascribes to monasticism, his application and extension of monastic standards to the Church in general can hardly be put down to his being no more than a "popularizer" of monasticism.[143] Monasticism came among the common people to this extent at least: that for Gregory the ideal of the activity of the ecclesiastical elite was action in the monastic spirit.

[143] Richards, *Popes*, p. 255.

CHAPTER FIVE

GREGORY AND THE GREEK EAST

Phil Booth

It has long been recognized that Gregory the Great stood at a crossroads, both geographical and chronological. For those historians who look back to the age of Jerome, Gregory appears as the last of a vanishing species, a cultured Roman with extensive links to the eastern Mediterranean; and for those who look forward to the world of Charlemagne and his heirs, he looks like the first medieval pope, an aristocratic monoglot who extended the tentacles of papal influence deep into Western Europe. This, perhaps, is the central paradox for the historian of Gregory, and how we present his career, thought and context will to a large extent depend on both the chronological and geographical viewpoint which we assume. This paper eschews any attempt to implicate Gregory's life within a grander narrative of rise or decline, important though such attempts are, and assays instead to situate and understand him within his own context. The perspective, however, is avowedly eastern; not because the western material is less interesting or less important of course, but rather because an eastern perspective provides an important corrective to any temptation to regard Gregory, in reductionist terms, as "the Father of the Middle Ages". Complex and multifarious networks still bound Gregory to the eastern Mediterranean. Indeed, the existence of those same networks provides a crucial context for comprehending Gregory's cult, a cult which first manifested not in Latin circles, but in a group of Greek monks exiled in Rome.

Gregory in Eastern Perspective

In 579, before his election as pope, Gregory had been dispatched to Constantinople as *apocrisarius*. Although this formative period makes little explicit impact upon his extant corpus,[1] he was here to earn the

[1] See the brief comments on staying within a community of fellow Roman monks at: Gregory, *Reg. ad Leandrum*, ed. Marc Adriaen (CCSL 143:1–2). Cf. the negative comments on his time at: Gregory, *Reg.* 11.27; CCSL 140:908–09; and the claim that he resided with

acquaintance of the East's most pre-eminent Greek-speaking persons. On the basis both of his mission and the friendships manifested in the *Letters*, it has sometimes been suggested—contrary to what Gregory himself tells us in no uncertain terms[2]—that the pope must have had a high degree of competence in Greek, demonstrated in Gregory's intermittent use of Greek words (both in the original and in transliteration), his occasional claims to have consulted Greek manuscripts, and, in particular, his frequent reference to Greek patristic texts.[3] As several scholars have argued, however, there is no unambiguous instance in which Gregory can be shown to have consulted a Greek manuscript in the original, rather than in Latin translation,[4] and he himself in fact bemoans the problem of depending on the translations of his Roman contemporaries.[5] We should, therefore, distinguish between different zones of competence, that is, between comprehension and communication.[6] There is some indication of a limited aptitude in Gregory's reading; little, however, in writing or speaking.

Eulogius of Alexandria at: John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 147 (PG 87C:3012A). I am doubtful of the contention of John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, 3 vols (Toronto, 2004), 3:768 that the statement of *Reg.* 11.27 to the empress Theoctista, "cum apud vestigia dominorum in regia urbe demorarer" (CCSL 140A:908), can be treated as evidence for Gregory's residence in the imperial palace.

[2] For Gregory's famous denials of competence in Greek, see *Reg.* 7.29, 11.55, and the somewhat ambiguous statement in *Reg.* 3.63 (CCSL 140:214): "Give my greetings to the Lady Dominica, to whom I have not responded, because although she speaks Latin she wrote to me in Greek"; "Domnae Dominicae salutes meas dicite, cui minime respondi, quia cum sit Latina Graece mihi scripsit." All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

[3] See esp. Joan M. Petersen, "Did Gregory the Great Know Greek?" in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. D. Baker, Studies in Church History 13 (Oxford 1976), pp. 121–34; also eadem, "Greek Influences upon Gregory the Great's Exegesis of Luke 15,1–10 in *Homelia in Evangelium* 2, 34," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Rome, 1986), pp. 521–29; ead. "The Influence of Origen upon Gregory the Great's Exegesis of the Song of Songs," *Studia Patristica* 18:1 (1989), 343–47.

[4] See e.g. Gerard J.M. Bartelink, "Pope Gregory the Great's Knowledge of Greek" in John C. Cavadini (ed.), *Gregory the Great: A Symposium* (Notre Dame, IN, 1995), pp. 117–36; and not least Petersen, in " 'Homo omnino latinus'? The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great," *Speculum* 62 (1987), 529–51 (arguing that Gregory did not access Ps.-Dionysius in the original).

[5] See *Reg.* 10.21 (CCSL 140A:855): "For there are none who can express the sense, but always want to translate word for word, and confound all sense of what has been said. Thus it is that we are by no means able to understand what has been translated except with great labour." "Dum enim non sunt, qui sensum de sensu exprimant sed transferre verborum semper proprietatem volunt, omnem dictorum sensum confundunt. Unde agitur ut ea quae translata fuerint nisi cum gravi labore intellegere nullomodo valeamus." Cf. *Reg.* 1.28 (on translation sense for sense), and *Reg.* 7.27 (bemoaning the lack of good translators from Latin at Constantinople).

[6] Emphasized in Guglielmo Cavallo, "Quale Bisanzio nel mondo di Gregorio Magno?" *Augustinianum* 47 (2007), 209–26.

We must nonetheless not allow the decline of classical bilingualism, which the Roman aristocrat Gregory so powerfully exemplifies, to be mapped too readily onto a narrative of the estrangement of East and West. For while Gregory's apparent difficulties in Greek might have made Cicero blush, the creeping gap between Greek and Latin speakers was a process now centuries old. Furthermore, his own *Letters*, to which we now turn in more detail, provide a fragmented but nevertheless invaluable window onto the extensive networks of culture, communication and friendship which still bound together the Latin and Greek speaking elites of the Roman Empire.[7]

Elsewhere within this volume, Matthew Dal Santo has demonstrated the pope's extensive connections with the Constantinopolitan secular elite, including several persons within the imperial household.[8] The extent of this secular correspondence, and the various social, economic and religious concerns which it reveals, on the one hand points to the remarkable ascent of the bishop (in Rome but also elsewhere) as a significant social actor at the local level; but, for our immediate purposes, it also demonstrates the degree to which Gregory himself was situated within a network of communication and mutual support which still bound together the elites of the old Roman Empire, despite the processes of cultural regionalisation and linguistic differentiation which would lead, in the end, to the world of the Middle Ages. Simplistic divides between "West" and "East", on the one hand, or between Latin speakers and Greek speakers, on the other, cannot capture the complexity of Gregory's position, nor indeed his continued commitment to a political philosophy wedded to the Eusebian notion of a pious Roman Empire under God.[9]

That consciousness of belonging to a world which was integrated within the eastern Mediterranean is expressed not only in Gregory's letters to the members of the imperial regime at Constantinople, but also in

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[7] In respect of the letters and my topic, I regret that I have not been able to access Daniel Valle Ribeiro, "O Oriente e o Ocidente na correspondência de Gregório Magno," *Signum: Revista da ABREM* 4 (2002), 153–79; Silvia Acerbi, *Entre Roma y Bizancio: la Italia de Gregorio Magno a través de su Registrum Epistularum* (Madrid, 2006).

[8] Matthew J. Dal Santo, "Gregory the Great, the Empire, and the Emperor," *infra*.

[9] For a rejection of the simplicity of a posited separation of "East and West" or "Greek and Latin" in the 6th century, see recently Averil Cameron, "Old and New Rome: Roman Studies in Sixth-Century Constantinople," in *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown*, eds Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (Aldershot, 2009), pp. 15–36. For Gregory's political philosophy, Dal Santo, "Gregory the Great, the Empire, and the Emperor" (this volume).

his ecclesiastical correspondence with his eastern counterparts.[10] While Gregory's pontificate, situated between the *Three Chapters* crisis of the 6th century and the monothelete schism of the 7th, lacked the Christological drama which would so often characterize Latin-Greek Church relations in the aftermath of Chalcedon, he would nevertheless find himself enmeshed in a series of ecclesiastical controversies which pepper his correspondence with the East, and which demonstrate his sustained commitment to the intellectual and ecclesiological traditions of a pan-Mediterranean Church. Although in a letter to the emperor's sister he would express his distaste for the pernicious theological machinations which he had thought to characterize the Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical scene,[11] as *apocrisarius* he himself had become embroiled in a doctrinal controversy with the Constantinopolitan patriarch Eutychius. According to Gregory's account in the *Moralia in Iob*, the latter had declared that the post-resurrection body would be "impalpable" (*impalpabile*), prompting the *apocrisarius* to confront him and engage in a long exchange of biblical quotations. When the discussion broke down into mutual hatred, the Emperor Tiberius summoned them to a private audience and, deciding in favour of Gregory's position, declared that Eutychius' book on the resurrection should be burned. Gregory, however, recoiled from prosecuting the task, for soon after that the repentant patriarch died.[12]

As both Yves Marie-Duval and Dal Santo have demonstrated, this question was not *ex nihilo*, but rather partook of a far wider debate upon the resurrection within eastern circles, a debate which resonated with broader discussions on Origenism and Aphthartodocetism, on the nature of the individual *post-mortem*, and on the Church's ritual care for,

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[10] For other contributions on this subject, see Paul Goubert, "Patriarches d'Antioche et d'Alexandrie contemporains de saint Grégoire le grand: Notes de prosopographie byzantine," *Revue des Études byzantines* 25 (1967), 65–76; Igino Grego, "S. Gregorio Magno e i Patriarchi d'Oriente," *Studia orientalia christiana* 21 (1988), 267–93.

[11] See *Reg.* 11.27, describing how, as *apocrisarius*, numerous appellants had approached him under accusation of some contravention of sacramental protocol, and how he had in all instances thought such accusations contrived.

[12] *Moralia in Iob* 14.56 (CCSL 143A:743–44). Cf. the rather veiled reference to the controversy in Eustratius Presbyter, *Vita Eutychii* (ed. C. Laga, *Eustratii Presbyteri Vita Eutychii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani*, CCSG 25 [Turnhout, 1992] p. 79, ll. 2449–58), speaking of "the child-minded" (οἱ νηπιόφρονες) who opposed Eutychius on the question of the resurrection; and the later treatments in Bede, *HE* 2.1; Paul the Deacon, *Vita Greg.* 9; John the Deacon, *Vita Greg.* 1.28–30. See also the description of Eutychius' adherence to "those who denied the resurrection of the body," and the scandal which it reportedly caused, in John of Ephesus, *HE* 2.36, 3.17.

and condemnation of, the dead.[13] Nevertheless, as Dal Santo has rightly argued, we need not suppose that Gregory's intervention represented an inapposite intrusion in a sophisticated eastern debate, the meaning and significance of which he could not have comprehended, for his own *Dialogues* demonstrate a full engagement with, and appreciation of, those same Christological, sacramental and eschatological debates.[14] The participation of Gregory therein thus demonstrates the sustained integration of Latin thought within the urbane intellectual currents so visible in the Greek theological milieu.

Although Gregory would often find himself at odds with his eastern, in particular Constantinopolitan, contemporaries, his very interest in eastern affairs cautions against too pronounced a separation of western and eastern thought in this period. Thus, while the different stances adopted in several controversies point to divergent modes of thinking which would come to characterize the divide between Latin and Greek Christendom, we should not overstate the novelty of that divergence, nor retroject the position of the medieval papacy onto the earlier period.

The most prominent of such controversies was, of course, that which concerned the Constantinopolitan patriarch's adoption of the title "ecumenical". Although others had applied that title to the bishop of the eastern capital since the early 6th century, the controversy reportedly erupted when in 588 the patriarch John the Faster applied it to himself in a letter to Gregory's predecessor Pelagius.[15] Gregory's own denunciation of the title is first extant in a series of missives dispatched on 1 June 595 to Maurice, the Empress Constantina, the Constantinopolitan patriarch John and

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[13] See Yves-Marie Duval, "La discussion entre l'apocrisiaire Grégoire et le patriarche Eutychios au sujet de la résurrection de la chair: l'arrière-plan doctrinal oriental et occidental," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 347–66, esp. 348–50.

[14] See esp. Matthew J. Dal Santo, "Philosophy, Hagiology and the Byzantine Origins of Purgatory" in *The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul*, eds Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon, Studies in Church History 45 (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 52–63; idem, "Gregory the Great and Eustratius of Constantinople: the *Dialogues on the Miracles of the Italian Fathers* as an Apology for the Cult of the Saints," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009), 421–57; *contra* Duval "La discussion," esp. 358–59.

[15] Gregory refers to his predecessor's opposition to the title in *Reg.* 5.39, 5.41, 5.44, 9.157. For that opposition, see Siméon Vailhé, "Le Titre de Patriarche oecouménique avant saint Grégoire le grand," and "Saint Grégoire le grand et le titre de Patriarche oecouménique," *Echos d'Orient* 11 (1908), 65–69, 161–71; André Tuilier, "Le Sens de l'adjectif *oikoumenikos* dans la tradition patristique et dans la tradition byzantine," *Studia Patristica* 7 (1966), 413–24; George E. Demacopoulos, "Gregory the Great and the Sixth-century Dispute over the Ecumenical Title," *Theological Studies* 70 (2009), 600–21, at 602–3.

the eastern patriarchs Eulogius of Alexandria and Anastasius of Antioch (the latter deposed but, in the pope's view, still legitimate).[16] The pope's position on the use of the title was clear and consistent, and continued upon the election of John's successor Cyriacus: the title was alien to the precepts of the canons and the fathers, and represented an unwarranted proclamation of episcopal arrogance, for the Church alone, and not an individual, could be considered "universal". Indeed, Gregory claimed, St. Peter had never been called "universal apostle", and Pope Leo himself had refused the title "universal" at the Council of Chalcedon. Why then should Constantinople, whose patriarchs in the past had often lapsed into heresy, presume to adopt it now? The patriarchs' arrogance in assuming it, the pope dramatically concluded, foreshadowed the Antichrist.[17]

Gregory's protest occurred at a time of considerable tension with the emperor and patriarch at Constantinople, when the pope had signed an independent treaty with the Lombards (and suffered a rebuke from the emperor for his trouble),[18] and when papal jurisdiction in the Balkans was under threat from the usurpation of its privileges at Constantinople.[19] In the East, however, Gregory's dramatic protestations appear to have fallen for the most part on deaf ears: Anastasius of Antioch considered it "of no consequence" (*causam nullum esse*); the emperor Maurice dismissed the issue as "frivolous" (*frivolus*); and even Eulogius of Alexandria, who had dramatically submitted to papal authority on the issue in 598, appeared somewhat unwilling to discuss it.[20] In the East, the use of the title not only had a significant pedigree, but also expressed a long-standing reality, that is, the political and canonical precedence of Constantinople within the eastern Church. But in Rome, where the Greek οἰκουμενικός was rendered in Latin with the perhaps unfortunate *universalis*,[21] its assumption represented a further ecclesiological challenge to Roman claims to

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[16] See *Reg.* 5.37, 5.39, 5.41, 5.44.

[17] For the various objections to the controversy, see *Reg.* 5.37, 5.39, 5.41, 5.44, 7.5, 7.24, 7.28, 7.30, 7.31, 8.29, 9.157, 9.176, 13.41. For the dramatic claim concerning the Antichrist, see *Reg.* 5.39, 7.28, 7.30. For discussion, see André Tuilier, "Grégoire le grand et le titre de patriarche oecuménique" in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 69–82; Demacopoulos, "Sixth-century Dispute".

[18] See *Reg.* 5.36.

[19] For this affair, revolving around the election of Maximus of Salona, see *Reg.* 4.16, 4.20, 4.38, 5.6, 5.29, 5.39, 6.3, 6.25, 6.26, 6.48, 7.17, 8.11, 8.24, 8.36.

[20] See respectively, *Reg.* 7.24 (CCSL 140:479); 7.30 (CCSL 140:491); 6.61 (CCSL 140:434); also, again frustrated at Eulogius' reticence, *Reg.* 9.176 (CCSL 140A:733).

[21] For the tension between these two terms, see esp. Demacopoulos, "Sixth-century Dispute," 616–19.

pre-eminence amongst the patriarchal sees, and a pastoral affront to Gregory's own convictions on the necessity for episcopal humility. Thus, when Eulogius had ceded to papal objections to the title, stating "as you have commanded" (*sicut iussistis*), and calling Gregory "universal pope" (*universalis papas*), his correspondent had rewarded him with a swift rebuke.[22] The pope was simply *servus servorum Dei*, and nothing more.

These same ecclesiological concerns inform a simultaneous, interrelated disagreement in which Gregory assumed a polemical position against his Constantinopolitan counterpart. That disagreement revolved around a doctrinal dispute at Constantinople concerning John of Chalcedon and Anastasius of Isauria, two priests accused of heresy who had, according to Gregory, been beaten within the cathedral church of Constantinople.[23] Although John the Faster denied the latter charge, it is evident from Gregory's correspondence with him that he proceeded to convene a council to examine John and Anastasius, and condemned them both as heretics (the pair were accused, it appears, of contravening the Council of Ephesus, perhaps under an accusation of Messalianism).[24] Before that council, Gregory had warned his correspondent Narses that, although the Constantinopolitan patriarch had claimed to be acting according to the

[22] See *Reg.* 8.29 (CCSL 140A:552).

[23] See *Reg.* 3.52 (CCSL 140:197–99).

[24] The importance of Ephesus is emphasized in *Reg.* 6.14 and 7.31. In the latter, to Eulogius and Athanasius, Gregory states: "Besides which, three years ago, compelled by the case of the Isaurian monks who were accused of heresy, in order to satisfy me, my lord, late brother and fellow priest John sent me letters in which he attempted to show that they had contradicted the definitions of the Ephesian synod, and he dispatched certain chapters to us, as if from the same synod, to which those men were opposed. But among others things therein was contained a statement on the soul of Adam, that it did not die in sin, and that the devil did not enter into the heart of man, and that anyone who said such things would be anathema." "Praeterea ante triennium cogente causa monachorum Isauriae, qui haeretici accusabantur, satisfaciens mihi quondam frater et consacerdos meus domnus Iohannes litteras missit, quibus nitebatur ostendere eos Ephesinae synodi definitionibus contradixerunt, velut ex eadem synodo certa nobis, quibus ipsi obsisterent, capitula destinavit. Inter alia autem scriptum illic continebatur de Adae anima, quia in peccato mortua non fuerit et quod diabolus in cor hominis non ingrediatur et, si quis haec dixisset, anathema esset." (CCSL 140:493–94). The latter doctrine appears to reflect the Messalian belief in an indwelling psychological demon after the Fall. Messalianism was indeed condemned at Ephesus, although no specific doctrines were referred to; see *Acta* of the *Concilium universale Ephesenum* (ed. Eduard Schwartz, ACO 1,1:117–8; ACO 1,4:354–5). Different western and eastern interpretations of Adam's sin would continue to be a problem after Gregory's lifetime; see e.g. Maximus Confessor's defence of Pope Theodore on the subject in *Opusculum* 10, *Ad Marinum Cypri presbyterum* (PG 91:133B–137C). I cannot concur with the position of Tuilier, "Grégoire le grand et le titre," p. 73, that Athanasius was condemned for not accepting the Council of 553.

canons, the pope intended to bring all his influence to bear on the case, and when the *Acts* of the case arrived in Rome—*Acts* in which, we should note, John the Faster had repeatedly used the title "ecumenical patriarch"—he concluded that the priest Anastasius was indeed a Manichaean, but furthermore that the person who had marked the latter's confession for doctrinal deviation was himself a Pelagian. The priest John, moreover, he absolved altogether, and wrote to his Constantinopolitan equivalent repudiating his condemnation as a Marcionist.[25]

In the aftermath of the pair's condemnation in the capital, Anastasius had appealed to the pope in Rome, repenting his innocent reading of heretical books, confessing the four ecumenical councils and accepting the fifth.[26] That appeal perhaps indicates something of the substance of the papal involvement, for whatever Gregory's opinions on the content of the accusations launched at John and Anastasius, the controversy had profound implications for the respective hierarchical placement of Rome and Constantinople. From the perspective of the condemned, an appeal to Rome perhaps represented a final resort, an expedient exploitation of its exteriority to the eastern ecclesiastical scene and, no doubt, of papal ecclesiological aspirations. (Such appeals, we should note, could work in both directions—elsewhere, Gregory writes to his Constantinopolitan *apocrisarius* warning him of an "apostate" who has come to appeal his case before the patriarch.[27]) From the perspectives of the competing patriarchs, however, the dispute represented a test case of their respective jurisdictions, an episode in the perpetual struggle for position. It must be emphasized, however, that such disputes were nothing new—rather than showing the increasing estrangement of Rome from the East, these controversies in fact serve to demonstrate Rome's sustained investment in a long-standing game of ecclesiological chess with Constantinople.[28]

This investment is also evident in Gregory's substantial correspondence with the other eastern patriarchs of the period, in particular, the aforementioned patriarchs Anastasius of Antioch and Eulogius of Alexandria.

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[25] See *Reg.* 3.63, 5.44, 5.45, 6.14, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17.

[26] See *Reg.* 6.65 for Athanasius' visit; cf. Gregory, *Dial.* 4.40 (SC 265:144), which refers to "nunc apud nos Athanasius, Isauriae presbiter". For Gregory's connection to Isauria and its monks, see also *Reg.* 5.35.

[27] *Reg.* 5.6; cf also *Reg.* 8.6, to Amos of Jerusalem, describing that an acolyte serving under the papal *apocrisarius* in Constantinople has fled to his church.

[28] As rightly emphasized in Robert A. Markus, "Gregory the Great's Europe," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 31 (1981), 21–36, at 29–34.

From a later Greek source we ascertain that Gregory's friendship with Eulogius was formed while he was *apocrisarius* in Constantinople,[29] and it must have been in the same period that he encountered Anastasius, for under Justin II the latter had been deposed from the patriarchate of Antioch, and exiled to the capital.[30] Gregory nevertheless continued to treat him as *de facto* patriarch, interceding with the emperor on his behalf and including him amongst the recipients of his synodical.[31] Indeed, when Anastasius was restored to his former position in 593, the pope dispatched a letter expressing his delight at his friend's restoration.[32]

Gregory's correspondence with these two eastern friends is rich in detail, demonstrating the continued integration of their world (not least, some wonderful wrangling over shipments of timber from Rome to Alexandria).[33] One particular theme of note concerns the status of particular texts or, rather, the Roman suspicion that forgeries were rife within the East. Thus in a letter to Anastasius, Gregory complained that the Constantinopolitan patriarch Cyriacus had in a letter condemned one Eudoxius, whom he could not identify. Gregory asked his correspondent to identify Eudoxius in the writings of the fathers (in fact, Eulogius of Alexandria would provide the evidence which reassured him).[34] Furthermore, he added to Anastasius in the same letter, when John of Constantinople had condemned the aforementioned John and Anastasius, he had sent to Rome copies of the *Acts* of Ephesus which contained passages with no correspondents in either the Roman or Ravennan copies, and indeed containing heresies (elsewhere, Gregory suggested to Anastasius' successor Anastasius II that the Constantinopolitan documents had become

[29] See John Moschus, *Pratum* 147 (PG 87C:3012A).

[30] Anastasius was deposed by Justin II in 570; see Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE* 5.5–6 (eds Joseph Bidez and Léon Parmentier [London, 1898], pp. 201–02); Theophanes, *Chronographia*, AM 6062 (ed. Carl de Boor [Leipzig, 1883], p. 243).

[31] For the intervention with Maurice, and the attempt to bring Anastasius to Rome, see *Reg.* 1.6, 1.7. For Anastasius' inclusion within the encyclical sent to the other patriarchs, see *Reg.* 1.24, 1.25.

[32] *Reg.* 5.42.

[33] See the extraordinary references to a trade in timber between Rome and the patriarch of Alexandria, at *Reg.* 7.37, 8.28, 9.176, 10.21, 13.43. For the same trade between Italy and the patriarch of Alexandria, cf. Leontius of Neapolis, *Vita Iohannis Elimosynensis* 11, 28 (ed. André-Jean Festugière in idem and Lennart Rydén, *Léontios de Néapolis: Vie de Syméon le Fou, Vie de Jean de Chypre* [Paris, 1974], pp. 359, 380).

[34] See *Reg.* 7.31; cf. *Reg.* 7.31, 8.29.

contaminated with the *Acts* of the Ephesian Latrocinium).[35] For Gregory, therefore, the patriarchs were able to provide an invaluable service, validating (or invalidating) eastern texts which the papacy considered corrupted. The papal position in these letters was, of course, polemical and patriotic; but the important implication is not the assumption or assertion of Roman or Latin superiority, but rather the sustained devotion to a thought world which transcended the parochial, and which demanded dialogue rather than diktats or simple disinterest.[36]

As we have seen, throughout the dispute over the Constantinopolitan use of the title "ecumenical patriarch", Gregory repeatedly attempted to recruit both Anastasius and Eulogius to the Roman cause. Eulogius, who was celebrated as a staunch defender of both Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo, appears on several occasions to have deferred to papal opinion and, as we have seen, once received a reprimand for his excessive deference. Elsewhere he seems even to have acknowledged papal claims to pre-eminence amongst the other patriarchates. In a letter sent to the Alexandrian patriarch in July 596, Gregory explained the special bond which tied together the sees of St. Peter and St. Mark:[37]

> For as it is clear to all that the blessed evangelist Mark was sent to Alexandria by St. Peter, the apostle and his master, so we are bound together by the unity of this master and disciple, so that I seem to preside over the see of the disciple because of the master, and you over the see of the master because of the disciple.

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[35] See *Reg.* 7.31; cf. on the same issue, *Reg.* 6.14 (CCSL 140:383): "(A)nd we think that, just as the Council of Chalcedon was falsified in one place by the Constantinopolitan Church, something similar was done in the case of the Council of Ephesus." "et existimamus quia, sicut Chalcedonensis synodus in uno loco ab ecclesia Constantinopolitana falsata est, sic aliquid et in Ephesiana synodo factum est." For the suggestion (made to Anastasius II) of contamination, see *Reg.* 9.136. The latter, we should note, is named as the translator into Greek of Gregory's *RP*; see *Reg.* 12.24; and Rita Lizzi, "La traduzione greca delle opere di Gregorio Magno: dalla *Regula Pastoralis* ai *Dialogi*," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo: XIX Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana in collaborazione con l'École française de Rome, Roma, 9–12 maggio 1990, I. Studi storici*, 2 vols (Rome, 1991), 2:41–57.

[36] For this universalism in Gregory's thought, see also Sofia Boesch Gajano, "Tra oriente e occidente: le coordinate geopolitiche del pontificato di Gregorio Magno" in *L'Orbis Christianus Antiquus di Gregorio Magno*, ed. Letizia Pani (Rome, 2007), pp. 1–18.

[37] *Reg.* 6.61 (CCSL 140:434): "Nam sicut omnibus liquet quod beatus evangelista Marcus a sancto Petro apostolo magistro suo Alexandriam sit transmissus, huius nos magistri et discipuli unitate constringimur, ut et ego sedi discipuli praesidere videar propter magistrum et vos sedi magistri propter discipulum." For the same theme of Mark as the disciple of Peter, cf. *Reg.* 8.28, 10.14.

Eulogius, rather than rejecting Gregory's veiled declaration of seniority, instead seems to have acknowledged it, for in a letter of the subsequent year the pope referred to his correspondent's acknowledgement that "St Peter, head of the apostles" sits upon the papal throne "right up to now in his successors".[38]

Gregory's rhetoric of the shared Petrine foundation of the Roman and Alexandrian sees extended also to Antioch. Thus, in a letter to Anastasius he referred to the fact that "we have in common [St Ignatius'] master, the prince of the apostles, even so none of us has the disciple of the same prince as his alone,"[39] while in the response to that letter in which Eulogius had acknowledged the papal rhetoric of the pope as the successor of St. Peter, he stated:[40]

> And whence, while there are many apostles, yet with regard to the principality itself, the see of the prince of the apostles alone has strengthened in authority, which is in three places and of one. For he himself elevated the see [of Rome], in which he even deemed it worthy to rest and to end the present life. He himself adorned the see [of Alexandria], to which he sent his disciple as evangelist. He himself fortified the see [of Antioch], in which he sat for seven years, although he would leave it. Therefore, since the see is one and of one, over which from divine authority three bishops now preside, whatever good I hear about you, I impute this to myself.

At a time when ecclesiological tensions with the capital had reached a notable peak, therefore, Gregory deployed a rhetoric which at once emphasized both the historical ties which bound together the three sees

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[38] *Reg.* 7.37 (CCSL 140:500). Cf. *Reg.* 10.21 (CCSL 140A:852), in which Gregory praises Eulogius for defending a Roman cause (perhaps the issue of the ecumenical title) at Constantinople: "For as a minister of truth, a follower of Peter and a preacher of the holy Church, I know that you were able to say through a learned mouth those things which ought to come forth from the see of the apostle Peter." "Nam veritatis minister, Petri sequax et sanctae ecclesiae praedictor illa scio quia loqui potuisti, quae de sede Petri apostoli per os doctoris sonare debuerunt."

[39] *Reg.* 5.42 (CCSL 140:327): "Sicut enim magistrum eius apostolorum principem habemus communem, ita quoque eiusdem principis discipulum nullus nostrum habet privatum."

[40] *Reg.* 7.37 (*CCSL* 140:501): "Unde et, cum multi sint apostoli, pro ipso tamen principatu sola apostolorum principis sedes in auctoritate convaluit, quae in tribus locis unius est. Ipse enim sublimavit sedem, in qua etiam quiescere et praesentem vitam finire dignatus est; ipse decoravit sedem, in quam evangelistam discipulum misit; ipse firmavit sedem, in qua septem annis, quamvis discessurus, sedit. Cum ergo unius atque una sit sedes, cui ex auctoritate divina tres nunc episcopi praesident, quicquid ego de vobis boni audio, hoc mihi imputo."

of St. Peter, and Constantinople's own distinct lack of an apostolic past.[41] His target, we should note, was not an undifferentiated "Byzantium".[42]

Gregory from Eastern Perspective

Both Anastasius and Eulogius were prominent members of an eastern religious elite in which the dividing lines between the different Chalcedonian patriarchates had become blurred. Before his election as patriarch of Antioch, Anastasius had been his predecessor's *apocrisarius* at Alexandria;[43] while Eulogius, before his ascent to the throne of Alexandria, had served as a cleric in Antioch.[44] Both, therefore, were members of an eastern Chalcedonian episcopate bound together across the different provinces through mutual ties of friendship. In his affectionate correspondence with the two patriarchs—and with his own credentials as a former diplomat within the East—Gregory was thus integrated into a Chalcedonian commonwealth which stretched across the eastern Mediterranean. This same commonwealth was, in the end, to guarantee his own reputation both in the East and, indeed, in the West.

Within that eastern world, divisions between the leaders of the monastic and clerical vocations were also becoming less distinct—Anastasius of Antioch, for example, was a former Palestinian monk, and his own successor, Gregory, was erstwhile head of monasteries both at Jerusalem and on Sinai.[45] Gregory the Great, in fact, had his own associations

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[41] For the rhetoric of the tripartite organisation of the Church, cf. the analysis of Claude Dagens, "L'Église universelle et le monde oriental chez saint Grégoire le grand," *Istina* 20 (1975), 466–69; Demacopoulos, "Sixth-century Dispute," 613–14.

[42] For this point made with force, see Lellia Cracco Ruggini, "Grégoire le grand et le monde byzantin," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 83–94.

[43] See John of Ephesus, *HE* 1.41 (ed. Edward W. Brooks, *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae ecclesiasticae pars tertia* [Louvain, 1952], p. 79); also *Vita Symeoni Iunioris* 204 (ed. Paul Van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon le Stylite le Jeune*, 2 vols [Brussels, 1962], 1:177–78). Anastasius' biography is difficult to reconstruct due to his frequent confusion with his successor Anastasius II and with Anastasius Sinaita; for some of the problems, see Günter Weiss, *Studia Anastasiana I* (Munich, 1965); Stergios N. Sakkos, *Περὶ Ἀναστασίων Στναϊτῶν* (Thessaloniki, 1964).

[44] For Eulogius as "the head of a hospice at Antioch" prior to his election as patriarch, and for his involvement with Gregory of Antioch in the famous scandal concerning the sacrifice of a child, see John of Ephesus, *HE* 1.40; 3.29. See also the short biography contained within Photius, *Bibliotheca* 226 (ed. René Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque* [Paris, 1959–91], 4:111), which describes Eulogius, before his election, as priest at Antioch and leader "of the Monastery of the All-holy Theotokos, called Justinian's".

[45] Anastasius: *Vita Symeoni Iunioris* 204 (ed. Van den Ven, 1:277–78); Gregory: John Moschus, *Pratum* 139 (PG 87C:3002B–3004A). For the phenomenon of monastic ordination

with those same regions and in particular with their monastic communities. In September 600 he dispatched two famous letters to ascetics on Sinai: in the first, addressed to the priest Palladius, he warned him not to listen to his detractors (an indication, perhaps, that the latter had appealed for papal intervention in a dispute); while in the second, he thanked one abbot John for his letter, and informed him of a dispatch of monies and provisions, having heard of the want of bedding in Sinai's *hierochomium*.[46] That beneficence towards eastern monastic institutions extended also to Jerusalem, for in a late letter addressed to an otherwise unknown priest named Philip, Gregory refers to the construction of a monastery in the Holy City, funded through a bequest by "our son and abbot Probus" (perhaps the abbot of Gregory's own Monastery of St. Andrew). Philip, it appears, had requested that the construction work stop, but Gregory proclaimed that he was unable to do so. Instead, he sent Philip fifty gold coins (a considerable sum) as a blessing.[47]

Although Gregory did not consider the patriarch of Jerusalem as equivalent to those of Antioch and Alexandria—since it lacked a comparable association with St. Peter—it is nevertheless evident that he cultivated monastic correspondents in Palestine. In June of 597 he had written a letter to Anastasius, priest and *higoumen* of the Nea Monastery, an adjunct to that famous church which Justinian had constructed at Jerusalem.[48] The pope, it appears, had been asked to intervene in a quarrel concerning the spiritual virtues of fear and charity, and had found in his correspondent's favour. Nevertheless, he warned Anastasius:

> [Y]ou could have seemed to me much higher, much more sublime, if you had not assumed the leadership of the monastery which is called Nea, since in the same monastery, as I hear it, a certain type of monk is retained, and indeed many secular things are done under the pretence of holiness... But because quarrels have tended always to occur between the father of the same monastery and the pastor of the Church of Jerusalem, I believe that for that reason almighty God wanted your beloved and most holy brother, and

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in general in this period, see Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA, 2004).

[46] *Reg.* 11.1; 11.2.

[47] *Reg.* 13.26. For Probus, cf. *Reg.* 9.44, 9.68, 11.15.

[48] For the church see the famous description in Procopius, *De aedificiis* 5.6 (ed. Henry B. Dewing, *Procopius*, vol. 7, LCL [Cambridge, MA, 1954], pp. 342–8); and the spectacular epigraphic confirmation of its Justinianic origins in Nahman Avigad, "A Building Inscription of the Emperor Justinian and the *Nea* in Jerusalem," *Israel Exploration Journal* 27 (1977), 145–61.

> my co-priest, Amos to be in Jerusalem at the same time, so that the quarrels which I spoke of before might be put to an end.[49]

In a later letter to Amos, concerning an apostate Roman priest en route from Constantinople, Gregory did not mention the issue, but when Isaac succeeded Amos as patriarch of Jerusalem, Gregory's acknowledgement of his synodical once again referred to the same tensions, and warned the new patriarch to guard against strife.[50]

Against the background of the networks which still operated between Rome and the Eastern Roman Empire, and in the light of Gregory's generosity towards monastic communities there, it is perhaps less surprising to discover that the pope's famous sobriquet "the Great" appears for the first time not in a Latin, but rather in a Greek text. Indeed, Gregory's immediate reception in native Roman circles was, it appears, decidedly unenthusiastic. A short and relatively unadorned entry in the *Liber Pontificalis* simply records his major works, missionary and liturgical activities, and some small acts of euergetism; while the first Latin *Life* written in Rome was not completed until the 9th century, some two hundred years after his death.[51] In itself, this lack of Roman interest is, perhaps, not so unusual. But elsewhere within Western Europe, Gregory enjoyed a comparative posthumous popularity: in Britain, at the beginning of the 8th century, an anonymous monk of the monastery of Whitby composed the first full biography of the pope in Latin; and in the late 8th century Paul the Deacon, the celebrated historian of the Lombards, assembled his own biography of the pope.[52] It was, however, in eastern circles that Gregory's memory was most immediately and conspicuously cultivated.

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[49] *Reg.* 7.29 (CCSL 140:488): "Multo autem mihi altior, multo sublimior videri poteras, si neque ducatum monasterii quod Neas dicitur suscepisses, quod in eodem monasterio, sicut audio, monachorum quidem species tenetur, multa vero sub sanctitatis habitu saecularia aguntur... Sed quia inter patrem eiusdem monasterii et pastorem Hierosolymorum ecclesiae semper esse iurgia consueuerunt, credo quod omnipotens Deus idcirco dilectionem tuam et sanctissimum fratrem et consacerdotem meum Amos esse uno tempore Hierosolymis voluit, ut ea quae praedixi iurgia tollerentur."

[50] *Reg.* 11.28. For Gregory's ties to Sinai, Palestine and indeed Arabia (on which see *Reg.* 11.20), see also Michele Piccirillo, "Gregorio Magno e le province orientali di Palestina e Arabia" in *Liber Annuus* 54 (2004), 321–41.

[51] See John the Deacon, *Vita Greg.* (PL 75:63–242); *LP* 66 (eds Duchesne and Vogel, 1:312).

[52] See Anonymous of Whitby, *Liber beati et laudabili viri Gregorii papae urbis Romae de vita atque virtutibus* (ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby* [Cambridge, 1968]); Paul the Deacon, *Vita*

The Greek author who first labelled Gregory "the Great" was John Moschus, a Cilician contemporary who had travelled amongst the monasteries of the eastern Mediterranean and who would, as a refugee from the Persian occupation of the eastern provinces, end his life at Rome.[53] Moschus' hagiographic opus, the *Pratum spirituale*, provides a convenient barometer of Gregory's own implication within eastern circles. Moschus, for example, knew a "John, higoumen of Raithou," perhaps that same John, the abbot of Sinai, with whom Gregory corresponded;[54] Moschus had furthermore attended the patriarchal consecration of Amos, and was perhaps the author of a monastic tale which denigrated the patriarch of Jerusalem as "a hater of monks";[55] and Moschus appears to have known Gregory, patriarch of Antioch, a former Palestinian monk whom he mentions several times in the *Pratum*, and who received Gregory the Great's synodical letter.[56] These few examples, therefore, once again allow us to amplify the evidence of the *Letters*, and to perceive how small were the degrees which separated the western Gregory from a far greater number of eastern clerics and ascetics. Moschus and Gregory never met, of course;

Greg. (PL 75:41–62). For the Whitby *Life* see Oronzo Limone, "La Vita di Gregorio Magno dell'Anonimo di Whitby," *Studi Medievali* 3rd series, 19 (1978), 37–68.

[53] See the prologue to the *Pratum spirituale*, ed. Hermann Usener, *Der heilige Tychon* (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 91–3, with the interpretation of Andrew Louth, "Did John Moschus Really Die in Constantinople?" *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 49 (1988), 149–54; *contra* Enrica Follieri, "Dove e quando morì Giovanni Mosco?" *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* n.s. 25 (1988), 3–39.

[54] See *Pratum* 115 (PG 87C:2980B). It is tempting to identify this "John the Cilician, higoumen of Raithou" with the dedicatee of John Climacus' *Scala paradisi* (and in turn to make John Climacus the correspondent of Gregory). The issue has been discussed many times; see e.g. Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 170–3.

[55] See *Pratum* 122 (PG 87C:2983–86) (*Latine*). The tale in which Amos is presented as anti-monastic is absent from the standard PG edition but was published in François Nau, "Vies et récits d'anchorètes (IVe–VIIe siècles), I: Analyse du ms. grec de Paris 1596," *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 8 (1903), 58–99, at 92–93, and perhaps belongs to Moschus. It describes how Amos, himself a former monk, once stripped a monk of his habit, and was admonished by John the Baptist in a vision. In atonement, the tale alleges, Amos constructed a church to the saint outside of Jerusalem, but then the Baptist appeared to him once more to inform him that he would, nevertheless, not be forgiven. The tale concludes that this is why his name does not appear in the diptychs.

[56] For references to Gregory, see *Pratum* 40 (PG 87C:2892D); *Pratum* 42 (PG 87C:2896D); *Pratum* 140 (PG 87C:3004B). It seems that Moschus was close to Gregory of Antioch's circle, for the *Pratum* shares several tales with the *Ecclesiastical History* of the patriarch's admirer Evagrius Scholasticus; see Henry Chadwick, "John Moschus and His Friend Sophronius the Sophist," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 25 (1974), 41–74, at 47–48. Cf. Gregory, *Reg.* 1.24; also *Reg.* 5.44; 9.157.

but had they done so the former would immediately have discovered that the latter had corresponded with several of his own acquaintances.

Not least, Moschus too was an admirer of Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria. Like Eulogius, the itinerant Moschus was familiar with both the Antiochene and the Alexandrian ecclesiastical scenes. Moschus had himself spent two sojourns in Alexandria, and it is possible that he encountered Eulogius then;[57] his disciple Sophronius several times referred to the patriarch with approval.[58] Moschus' own *Pratum*, furthermore, contains a series of three consecutive notices centred on the patriarch, two of which reinforce Eulogius' reputation as a staunch defender of Chalcedonian doctrine and his close connections both with Rome and with Gregory the Great.[59]

In the first, Menas relates an anecdote which Eulogius had heard from the Roman *apocrisarius* and future pope, Gregory, while a guest at his house in Constantinople (from which we ascertain their association in the capital). According to that tale, when Pope Leo had composed his celebrated *Letter* to Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople—better known as the dogmatic *Tome* recognized at Chalcedon—he had placed it "on the tomb of Peter, head of the apostles", and entreated the first of the disciples to correct it; forty days later, following a vision, Eulogius re-opened the *Letter* and found it corrected in the apostle's hand.[60] In the second, Theodore of Dara relates that when he had been a σύγκελλος of Eulogius in Alexandria, he saw in a dream a large, solemn-looking man who said, "Announce me to the sainted Pope Eulogius." When Theodore then asked the visitor how he wished to be announced, the latter replied, "I am Leo, the Roman pope." Leo had come to thank Eulogius for his efforts in defence of the Chalcedonian definition.[61]

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[57] For these sojourns, the first *c.*580 and the second *c.*607–14 (coterminous within the end of Eulogius' patriarchate), see Chadwick, "John Moschus" 49.

[58] Sophronius, *Epigrammata in locum hospitibus destinatum* (PG 87C:4009B); idem, *Miracula sanctorum Cyri et Johannis*, 1, 8, 9, 62, ed. Natalio Fernández Marcos, *Los Thaumata de Sofronio: Contribucion al Estudio de La* Incubatio *Cristiana* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 243, 253, 257, 379.

[59] For the other, see *Pratum* 146 (PG 87C:3009D), in which the martyr Julian appears to Eulogius to ask him to rebuild his shrine. Eulogius' output survives in meagre fragments; see *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, ed. Mauritius Geerard, vol. 3, 2nd ed., Corpus Christianorum (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 319–21, nos 6971–9. However, Photius ascribes to him various works (noted at ibid., p. 320, no. 6976), of which the most relevant for our purposes is the large *Defence of the Council of Chalcedon*; see Photius, *Bibliotheca* 103 (ed. Henry, 5:11–39).

[60] *Pratum* 147 (PG 87C:3012A–B): τοῦ κορυφαίου τῶν ἀποστόλων Πέτρου.

[61] *Pratum* 148 (PG 87C:3012C–3013A).

Alongside these celebrations of Eulogius within the *Pratum*, Gregory the Great is a conspicuous presence. We have seen how he appears as the author of a tale told to Eulogius while the latter was in Constantinople as his guest; but he also appears in two tales in which he is the actual subject. In one—which first appears in Gregory's own *Dialogues*, and which Moschus attributes to a Roman priest Peter, perhaps the interlocutor of that work—he relates how the pope once excommunicated a monk for contravening a rule that no monk should own any property. A little while later the monk, still under the punishment of exclusion, died, and Gregory was grieved, and gave an order that his archdeacon should read a prayer of redemption over the monk's burial place. That night the dead monk appeared to the same archdeacon, and related that he had now been released from prison. "And so," Moschus concludes, "it was known to all that in the hour that the archdeacon read the prayer over the tomb, in that same hour his soul was released from excommunication, and liberated from judgement."[62] This tale, we should note, survives in several Greek versions, and would later appear in Gregory's first full hagiography, the so-called Whitby *Life*.[63]

The other, which concerns Gregory's generosity towards a Palestinian monk at Rome, is worth quoting *in extenso*:[64]

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[62] *Pratum* 192 (PG 87C:3072A–C). Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 4.57 (SC 265:188–94).

[63] See Anonymous of Whitby, *Vita Greg.* 28 (ed. Colgrave, p. 124). The story is repeated in Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon* (eds Carl De Boor and Peter Wirth, *Georgius Monachus: Chronicon*, 2 vols [Leipzig, 1904], 2:748–9), and variant versions have been attributed also to Anastasius II of Antioch and Ps.-Anastasius of Sinai; see respectively Jean-Baptiste Pitra, *Iuris ecclesiastici graecorum historia et monumenta*, 2 vols (Rome, 1868), 2:276–7; François Nau, "Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase (le Sinaïte)," *Oriens christianus* 3 (1903), 56–90, at 84–85 (no. 54). Ivan Havener, "Two Early Anecdotes Concerning Gregory the Great from the Greek Tradition" in *The Medieval Mediterranean: Cross-Cultural Contacts*, eds Marilyn J. Chiat and Kathryn L. Reyerson (St Cloud, MN, 1988), pp. 19–24, at 21 argues convincingly that the Greek version contained in the Migne edition of Moschus' *Pratum* is a secondary rendering of an original by Anastasius II, the translator also of Gregory's *RP* (see Gregory, *Reg.* 12.24). He also makes the tantalising suggestion that Moschus, as a refugee at Antioch in the early 600s, might have heard the tale from Anastasius directly. For Gregory in the *Pratum*, see also Bazyli Degórski, "San Leone Magno e San Gregorio Magno nel *Pratum Spirituale* di Giovanni Mosco" in *Church, Society and Monasticism: Acts of the International Symposium, Rome, May 31–June 3 2006*, Studia Anselmiana 146, eds Eduardo López, Tello García and Benedetta Selene Zorzi (Rome, 2009), pp. 403–21, at 412–8.

[64] *Pratum* 151 (PG 87:3016D–3017A): Παρεβάλομεν εἰς τὰ μονίδια τῷ ἀββᾷ Ἰωάννῃ Πέρσῃ, καὶ διηγήσατο ἡμῖν περὶ τοῦ μεγάλου Γρηγορίου τοῦ μακαριωτάτου τῆς Ῥώμης προσκυνῆσαι τὰς θήκας τῶν ἁγιῶν ἀποστόλων Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου· καὶ ἐν μιᾷ, ὡς ἱστάμην εἰς τὸ μέσον τῆς πόλεως, θεωρῶ τὸν πάπαν Γρηγόριον δι' ἐμοῦ μέλλοντα παριέναι. Ἐλογισάμην οὖν βαλεῖν αὐτῷ μετάνοιαν. Ἰδόντες δέ με οἱ τοῦ ὀψικίου αὐτοῦ, ἤρξαντο ὁ καθεὶς αὐτῶν λέγειν μοι· Ἀββᾶ, μὴ

> We came to Abba John the Persian at Monidia, and he told us the following about the most blessed Gregory the Great Bishop of Rome: 'I went to Rome to worship at the tombs of the holy apostles Peter and Paul. One day, as I stood in the middle of the city, I saw Pope Gregory about to go past me, and so I thought I would prostrate myself before him. When those who were in his entourage saw me, one by one they began to say to me, 'Abba, do not prostrate yourself.' But I did not know why they said this to me. Besides, I considered it out of place not to prostrate myself before him. And so when the pope came near and saw that I was going to prostrate myself—may God be my witness, brothers—he prostrated himself on the ground first, and did not stand up before I had been pulled up. And he embraced me with much humility, and gave me three *nomismata* by hand, and ordered that I be given a cloak, and that all my needs be provided for. And so I glorified God who had bestowed upon him such humility, charity and love.

This story, in turn, was included in the first Roman biography of Gregory by John the Deacon, "from the stories of the Greeks recently translated for me".[65]

Intriguingly, however, this celebration of Gregory was not limited to Moschus alone, but extended to others within his circle. In the 1960s, Gérard Garitte published an appendix of spiritual tales contained within a Georgian manuscript of the *Pratum*, which he regarded as the product of a single author and dated, on internal evidence, to the period *c.*590–668.[66] The career of the author appears to mirror that of Moschus in several obvious ways: he was interested in the monasteries of Palestine, and was perhaps a monk of St. Sabas; he knew Moschus' disciple Sophronius as

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βάλε μετάνοιαν. Ἐγὼ δὲ ἠγνόουν διατί μοι τοῦτο λέγουσιν. Πλὴν ἄτοπον εἶναι ἐνόμισα μὴ βαλεῖν αὐτῷ μετάνοιαν. Ὡς οὖν πλησίον μου ἐγένετο ὁ πάπας, θεωρήσας ὅτι ὑπῆγον βαλεῖν μετάνοιαν, ὡς ἐπὶ κυρίῳ, ἀδελφοί· πρῶτος ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν μετάνοιαν, καὶ οὐ πρότερον ἀνέστη, ἕως οὗ ἐγὼ πρῶτος ἠγέρθην. Καὶ ἀσπασάμενός με μετὰ οὗ ἐγὼ πρῶτος ἠγέρθην. Καὶ ἀσπασάμενός με μετὰ πολλῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης, παρέσχεν μοι διὰ χειρὸς νομίσματα τρία, κελεύσας δοθῆναί μοι καὶ κουσσούλιν, καὶ τὰς χρείας μου πάσας. Ἐδόξασα οὖν τὸν Θεὸν, τὸν χαρισάμενον αὐτῷ τοιαύτην ταπείνωσιν πρὸς ἅπαντας, καὶ ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἀγάπην. For analysis, see also Havener, "Two Early Anecdotes," pp. 19–20; Degórski "San Leone Magno," pp. 413–14.

[65] John the Deacon, *Vita Greg.* 4.63 (PL 75:213C–D): "ex Graecorum relationibus ad me nuper interpretatis". It should be noted that the Greek tale of Gregory and the pauper/angel printed in Rudolf Abicht and Hermann Schmidt, "Quellennachweise zum Codex Suprasliensis," *Archiv für slavische Philologie* 18 (1896), 138–55, at 152–5, contains various Latinisms and is undoubtedly a translation from Latin; cf. John the Deacon, *Vita Greg.* 1.6, 9–10; 2.23. For Gregory's Greek hagiographic corpus, see also Hippolyte Delehaye, "S. Grégoire le grand dans l'hagiographie grecque," *Analecta Bollandiana* 23 (1904), 449–54; François Halkin, "Le pape S. Grégoire le grand dans l'hagiographie byzantine," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 21 (Rome, 1955), 109–14.

[66] See Gérard Garitte, "Histoires édifiantes géorgiennes," *Byzantion* 36 (1966), 398–423, at 398–406. Cf. idem, "La version géorgienne du *Pré spirituel*," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*, 2 vols (Rome, 1964), 2:179–85.

patriarch of Jerusalem, and regarded him as a champion of orthodox doctrine; and he had travelled in the Latin West, to Rome and Ravenna.[67] It is unsurprising, therefore, that Jean-Marie Sansterre has suggested that he was one of those twelve disciples of Moschus described within the brief biographical prologue attached to some manuscripts of the *Pratum*.[68] The author of the Georgian appendix, like Moschus, chose to include an anecdote which centres on Gregory the Great. Thus we are told that, while in Rome, one Abba Paul the scribe, from Cilicia, related how in the time of Gregory "who is called the wonder-worker" (*qui dictus est miraculorum patrator*) some Franks came to him and requested a relic of St. Peter, in order to place it in a new church named for the apostle. The pope, wishing to fulfil their request, cut a rag from the altar-cloth in the apostle's (Roman) church and, placing it in a box with a prayer, he left it at Peter's tomb for three days. The Franks accepted the box with delight but, upon returning home and opening it, discovered the small rag contained within. Enraged at the apparent deception, they returned to Rome to confront the pope. He wanted to reassure them, and so he led the Franks in a procession of clerics and others to the church of St. Peter where he opened the box and cut the rag with scissors. To the great dread and regret of its doubters, the cloth began to bleed.[69]

This striking tale was later integrated into another source which shares a connection with Moschus: Gregory's first full hagiography, composed by an anonymous monk of Whitby in the early 8th century.[70] As Alan Thacker has argued in a recent article, these correspondences suggest that both authors drew upon a common corpus of written Gregorian material emanating from the pope's own circles in Rome;[71] but he also suggests

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[67] See the *Georgian Appendix to the Pratum spirituale*, Latin trans. by Garitte, "Histoires édifiantes géorgiennes," 406–23; chs 12–13 (set in Italy); chs 14–19 (set amidst the monasteries of Palestine); chs 18–19 (referring to Sophronius); and 30 (referring to the *laura* of Sabas). It should also be noted that the author shares Moschus' predilection for topographical and prosopographical precision, as well as a pervasive interest in the Eucharist; on the latter, see ibid., chs 13, 14, 16, 20, 22, 27, 28, and 30.

[68] Jean-Marie Sansterre, *Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne (milieu du VIe s.–fin du IXe s.)*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1983), 1:57–61.

[69] See the *Georgian Appendix to the Pratum Spirituale* 12 (Latin trans. Garitte 406–8). The same tale also survives in Arabic; see Joseph-Marie Sauget, "S. Grégoire le grand et les reliques de S. Pierre dans la tradition arabe chrétienne," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 49 (1973), 301–9. The story is reminiscent of a similar tale told by Gregory himself of Pope Leo, at *Reg.* 4.30.

[70] See Anonymous of Whitby, *Vita Greg.* 21 (ed. Colgrave, pp. 108–10).

[71] Alan Thacker, "Memorializing Gregory the Great: The Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998),

that the composition of the Whitby *Life* occurred on the back of Gregory's promotion in England by Theodore of Tarsus, the 7th-century archbishop of Canterbury.[72] Like Moschus, Theodore was a Cilician ascetic who had settled in Rome in the aftermath of the Persian invasions;[73] like Moschus, he seems to have known Sophronius and Maximus Confessor;[74] and like Moschus again, he appears to have been acquainted with Clement's lost *Hypotyposeis* (even more remarkable since it was also cited in the works of Maximus and, it seems, Sophronius).[75] Theodore of Tarsus, therefore, can

59–84, at 61–7, making the mistake, however, that the *Georgian Appendix* derives from the *Pratum* itself, rather than from an author close to Moschus who continued to write after the latter's death.

[72] Thacker, "Memorializing Gregory," 75–77.

[73] For Theodore's biography, see Henry Chadwick, "Theodore of Tarsus and Monotheletism," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski zum 8 Juli 1993*, eds Hanns Christof Brennecke et al. (Berlin, 1993), pp. 524–44; Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge (eds), *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 5–81; Michael Lapidge, "The Career of Archbishop Theodore," in *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1–29. For Theodore's connection to the Palestinian circle of Moschus, see also his ties to St. Anastasius the Persian—whose *Acts* had reportedly been composed by Modestus, co-monk of Moschus and Sophronius and briefly patriarch of Jerusalem, and whose cult Palestinians had transferred to Rome—in Carmela Vircillo Franklin, "Theodore of Tarsus and the *Passio S. Anastasii* (BHL 410b)," in *Archbishop Theodore*, ed. Lapidge, pp. 175–203; ead., *The Latin Dossier of Anastasius the Persian: Hagiographic Translations and Transformations* (Toronto, 2004).

[74] See Canterbury Commentator, *First Commentary on the Pentateuch* 35 (eds Bischoff and Lapidge), citing Sophronius as an authority on the etymology of the toponym *Emmaus* (which does not appear in his extant works). For the correspondence between Theodore's and Maximus' *corpora* see Bischoff and Lapidge (eds), *Biblical Commentaries*, p. 225; Lapidge "The Career," p. 24.

[75] See *Pratum* 176 (PG 87C:3045C–D), with Harry E. Echle, "The Baptism of the Apostles: A Fragment of Clement of Alexandria's Lost Work *Hypotyposeis* in the *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus," *Traditio* 3 (1945), 365–8; cf. Canterbury Commentator, *Second Canterbury Commentary on the Gospels* 82, eds Bischoff and Lapidge, p. 412. It is possible that the author of the *Commentary* cites directly from Moschus' *Pratum*, as suggested in Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, p. 226. The same scholars also suggest a direct connection between the same passage, *Pratum* 176, and Theodore of Canterbury, *Iudicia* 2.4.4, both of which cite Gregory Nazianzus as an authority on baptism by tears. For Maximus' citation of Clement's *Hypotyposeis* see Maximus Confessor, *Scholia on Ps.-Dionysius' On the Divine Names* (PG 4:228A); *Scholia on Ps.-Dionysius' On Mystical Theology* (PG 4:421B–C). The latter passage reads: "But I have read 'seven heavens' also in the *Disputation of Papiscus and Jason* ascribed to Aristo of Pella, and which Clement of Alexandria in the eighth book of *Hypotyposeis* says Saint Luke wrote." Sophronius, *On the Circumcision* 23–27 also refers to the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus* and ascribes it to St. Luke, perhaps indicating that he too knew the *Hypotyposeis*. For analysis of the newly discovered sermon by Sophronius see John Duffy, "New Fragments of Sophronius of Jerusalem and Aristo of Pella?" in *Bibel, Byzanz und Christlicher Orient: Festschrift für Stephen Gerö zum 65. Geburtstag*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 187, eds Dmitrij Bumazhnov et al. (Leuven, 2011) pp. 15–28, noting the connection with Clement, Moschus, and Maximus. For the baptism

be considered as a relative intimate of the Moschan circle. And alongside both Moschus and the author of the Georgian appendix to the *Pratum*, he can also be considered, through his connection with the Whitby *Life*, one of the earliest promoters of Gregory's cult.

This coincidence, which demonstrates the remarkable prestige which Gregory enjoyed within Moschus' monastic circle, perhaps represents nothing more than simple admiration for a pope whose connections with the Chalcedonian East, and with Moschus' own associates, had been extensive.[76] In a recent article Robert Coates-Stephens has nevertheless pointed to a further possible context, and one which allows us to view Moschus' tale of Gregory's generosity towards a Palestinian monk within the framework of a new community of eastern ascetics in 7th-century Rome. In 649, according to the *Acts* of a Lateran Council which had converged to condemn the eastern doctrine of monotheletism, the assembled western bishops were petitioned by a delegation of eastern monks who—like Moschus, Theodore and the author of the *Georgian Appendix*—had now settled in Rome, and who included representatives from two monasteries named for the Palestinian hero St. Sabas: the famed *laura* near Jerusalem, and a satellite of that same *laura* now in North Africa.[77] Most scholars now agree that in this same period a monastic institution at *Cella Nova* in Rome was renamed for Sabas, and populated, no doubt, with those same monks of Sabas whose leaders attended the Lateran (including, we should note, Maximus Confessor).[78] On the basis of various textual, archaeological

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by tears, see also Anonymous of Whitby, *Vita Greg.* 29 (on Gregory's baptism by tears of the soul of Trajan); on the latter, cf. in Greek Ps.-John of Damascus, *Oratio de his qui in fide dormierunt* (PG 95:261D–264A). I am grateful to Robert Coates-Stephens for bringing the latter to my attention.

[76] For this, see also Claude Dagens, "Grégoire le grand et le monde oriental," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 17 (1981), 243–52, and suggesting also that Gregory's reception in eastern circles is in part explained by the eastern quality of his own spirituality. For this quality, cf. Cavallo, "Quale Bisanzio."

[77] See *Acta Concilii Lateranensis* (ed. Rudolf Riedinger, ACO ser. 2,1:50, 57). We should also note that at least three monks from Moschus and Sophronius' Monastery of Theodosius at Jerusalem were in Rome at the time of the council; see Pope Martin's letter to John of Philadelphia (PL 87:154B, 162A); and Martin's letter to George, Archimandrite of the monastery of St. Theodosius (PL 87:167B).

[78] For discussion, see Sansterre, *Les moines grecs* 1:22–31; Robert Coates-Stephens, "S. Saba and the xenodochium de via Nova," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 83 (2007), 223–31. For Maximus' settlement of *Cella Nova* with other "Nestorian" monks from North Africa before the Lateran Synod, see George of Resh'aina, *Vita Maximi syriaca* 19, 24 (ed. Sebastian Brock, "An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor," *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 [1973], 299–346; repr. in idem, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, Collected Studies Series 199 [London, 1984], XII).

and epigraphic data, however, Coates-Stephens has argued that the same site was a continuation of a much earlier settlement, a *xenodochium de via nova* referred to in the correspondence of Gregory, and established by him for the reception of religious notables at Rome.[79] In this regard, it is perhaps significant therefore, that Moschus included within the *Pratum* a seemingly original tale which recorded Gregory's beneficence towards a Palestinian monk. In view of the *Pratum*'s composition at Rome, and the settlement there of eastern monks within a Gregorian institution soon to be named for St. Sabas, that tale perhaps constitutes something of a foundation myth for the community at *Cella Nova*, a retrospective celebration of papal patronage of eastern monks in exile.[80]

Conclusion

Although the title of this chapter has spoken of "Gregory and the Greek East," it is in many ways problematic to speak of the former as if he were somehow external to the latter. While Gregory's abilities in the Greek language were limited at best, he nevertheless remained integrated within the eastern Mediterranean through a complex network of political, economic and cultural ties, as well as the personal bonds of *amicitia* so evident in the *Letters*. In a context of Lombard pressure and Constantinopolitan interference within Roman jurisdiction, Gregory raised a vociferous protest over the arrogance of the "ecumenical patriarch" and his unwarranted condemnation of certain appellants to Rome, but these anxieties over Roman privilege were long-standing, and demonstrate above all the pope's sustained commitment to an ecclesiological dialogue with the East. Not least, Gregory emphasized at the same time the shared Petrine history which bound Rome indissolubly to Antioch and Alexandria.

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[79] Coates-Stephens, "S. Saba", 231–56. For the identification of *Cella Nova* and St. Sabas, as well as the link to Gregory, see esp. John the Deacon, *Vita Greg.* 1.9, who claimed that Gregory's mother Silvia lived "at that time next to the Gate of the Blessed Apostle Paul, in the place which is called Cella Nova, where now is the oratory dedicated to his name, and the famous monastery of the confessor of Christ Saint Baba..." (PL 75:66A): "... matre Silvia, tunc temporis juxta portam beati Pauli apostoli, loco qui dicitur Cella nova, quo hactenus oratorium nomini ejus dedicatum est, et famosum sancti Babae confessoris Christi monasterium... degente...".

[80] Cf. the comments of Havener, "Two Early Anecdotes," p. 20 on the same story: "Given the legendary character of the story... it does not seem wise to press its historicity. Far more significant, perhaps, is the attitude of openness between eastern Christianity and the Latin Church so clearly expressed in this story... We find a complete absence of antagonism on the part of this Greek writer toward the Latin Church."

Looking ahead, we could consider the gathering of western bishops and eastern ascetics at the Lateran Council in 649 in many ways as continuing the legacy of Gregory the Great.[81] At the most basic level, it expressed Rome's sustained commitment to asserting itself in conflicts which had arisen in the eastern provinces, as well as the continued willingness of eastern monks both to exploit the right of appeal to the papacy and to play upon the Roman rhetoric of patriarchal pre-eminence.[82] It was apposite, then, that in Rome those monks came to reside in a Gregorian institution established for the reception of foreign dignitaries, and thence to lead the way in celebrating the memory of a figure who, both then and now, defies attempts at neat geographical or cultural categorization, whether East or West, Greek or Latin.

[81] On the council and its *Acts*, which were composed by Maximus Confessor and his allies, see esp. the collected articles of Rudolf Riedinger, *Kleine Schriften zu den Konzilsakten des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Turnhout, 1998); also now Andrew J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes. Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, 590–752 A.D.* (Lanham, MD, 2007), pp. 113–57; Catherine Cubitt, "The Lateran Council of 649 as an Ecumenical Council," in *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700*, eds Mary Whitby and Richard Price (Liverpool, 2009), pp. 133–47.

[82] On this latter point, see Christophe von Schönborn, "La primauté romaine vue d'Orient pendant la querelle du monoénergisme et du monothélisme (VIIe siècle)," *Istina* 20 (1975), 476–92; Jean-Claude Larchet, *Maxime le Confesseur, médiateur entre l'Orient et l'Occident* (Paris, 1998), pp. 127–76.

PART 2

GREGORY'S THEOLOGICAL VISION

CHAPTER SIX

THE THEOLOGY OF GREGORY THE GREAT: CHRIST, SALVATION AND THE CHURCH

Bernard Green

Gregory was not a systematic theologian in the sense of exploring and developing ideas in a systematic way.[1] He did not write theological treatises dedicated to particular doctrinal problems. He was rarely caught up in theological disputes.[2] He showed little interest in technical vocabulary. Though at times capable of unexpected subtlety of thought, his was not a mind much given to speculation; his creativity is most apparent in his vividly imaginative reading of Scripture, not in the exploration of theological dilemmas. Nevertheless, his writings reveal clear and consistent theological views which underpin his exegesis and his spiritual teaching.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in his Christology. It is true that Gregory would happily use words such as *natura* or *substantia* interchangeably, made no attempt to probe their meaning, and showed little

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[1] The most comprehensive survey remains Frederick Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great. His Place in History and Thought*, 2 vols (London, 1905), 2:324–36; Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great. Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 162–78 offers a more sympathetic and penetrating study.

[2] The controversy concerning the *Three Chapters*, which were works of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa condemned by imperial decree in *c.*543 and at the second Council of Constantinople in 553, had led to a schism in northern Italy. Though Gregory's preoccupation with the schism was more political than doctrinal, he was not unaware of the theological issues; see Paul Maevert, "A Letter of Pelagius II composed by Gregory the Great," in *Gregory the Great: A Symposium*, ed. John Cavadini (Notre Dame, IN, 1995), pp. 94–116. For the lead-up to the Council of 553 and its acts, see Richard Price, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553, with related texts on the Three Chapters controversy*, 2 vols (Liverpool, 2009). For the Council's fallout, including in Italy, see Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubitt, *The Crisis of the Oikumene: The Three Chapters and the failed quest for unity in the sixth-century Mediterranean* (Turnhout, 2007). Rare examples of his engagement with purely theological disputes include his disagreement with the Patriarch Eutychios concerning the nature of the resurrected flesh: see Matthew Dal Santo's chapter in this volume; Yves-Marie Duval, "La discussion entre l'apocrisiaire Grégoire et le patriarche Eutychios au sujet de la résurrection de la chair. L'arrière-plan doctrinal oriental et occidental," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 347–66; and his debate with the Patriarch Eulogius over the ignorance of Christ: *Ep.* 10.21 (CCSL 140A:852–56).

interest in the formulas canonized in Leo's *Tome* or by Chalcedon. Yet he had a robust, coherent and consistent view of the identity of Christ and the relationship between his divine and human natures which shaped his understanding of salvation and the Church. This chapter will attempt to sketch the salient features of Gregory's theology in these three areas.

Christ

For Gregory, Christ was the Word of God incarnate. The single identity and sole actor in Christ was the Son of God. This made him deeply wary of what he took "Nestorianism"[3] to be, the belief that there were two distinct persons in Christ.[4] The titles for Christ that he liked to use were concrete and biblical: the incarnate Lord,[5] incarnate Word,[6] Lord God,[7] God Man[8] or God and man.[9] His best-loved terms by far were Mediator,[10] a favourite of both Augustine and Leo, which he employed about 50 times, and Redeemer,[11] which he used over 900 times. Mediator and Redeemer are soteriological titles, describing what Christ accomplished, but for Gregory both implied Christ's identity as God made man.

According to Gregory, Christ, as God, is born eternally and is thus perfect,[12] consubstantial, coeternal, co-equal with the Father, of whom

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[3] Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople 428–31, was accused of two distinct but overlapping errors: adoptionism and the doctrine of two Sons. Adoptionism was the view that Christ was a perfect man, adopted into a relationship of Sonship by God, and was taken to amount to a denial of Christ's divinity. The doctrine of two Sons was the view that Christ as Son of God and Son of Man, or Son of David, were two distinct identities and two agents. The latter accusation had some force, given Nestorius' presentation of the human acts of Christ as being performed by his humanity, and this was the account of "Nestorianism" followed by Gregory the Great. For Nestorius, see Frances M. Young with Andrew Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, 2nd ed. (London, 2010), pp. 288–98. For the way Cyril of Alexandria constructed an accusation of heresy out of Nestorius' teachings, see Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2004).

[4] This concern is voiced, for instance, in his letter to the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem in February 591, *Ep.* 1.24 (CCSL 140:32) and to the Emperor Maurice in June 595, *Ep.* 5.37 (CCSL 140:310).

[5] *Incarnatus Dominus* (*Mor.* 30.21.66, CCSL 143B:1536).

[6] *Incarnatum Verbum* (*HEz* 1.1.8, CCSL 142:9).

[7] *Deus Dominus* (*Mor.* Praef 9.19, CCSL 143:23).

[8] *Deus homo* (*I Reg.* 1.2, CCSL 144:56).

[9] *Deus et homo* (*Mor.* 2.23.42, CCSL 143:85).

[10] *Mediator Dei et hominum*, citing 1 Tim 2:5 (*Mor.* 22.17.42, CCSL 143A:1121).

[11] *Redemptor*, alluding to Job 19:25 or Acts 7:35 (*Mor.* 9.38.61, CCSL 143:501).

[12] *Mor.* 29.1.1 (CCSL 143:1434).

he is the strength and wisdom.[13] Christ, as man, is born in time in a way that the human mind cannot comprehend.[14] The double birth of Christ, in eternity of the Father and in time of the Virgin Mary, had long been presented as a way of showing that there was a single subject in Christ, the divine Word, and yet a duality of natures—as for example in Cyril's second letter to Nestorius,[15] the Formula of Reunion of 433,[16] Leo's *Tome*[17] and the Chalcedonian Definition.[18] This is the kernel of Gregory's Christology. It made him repeatedly insistent that Christ is not God by adoption, which again he plainly, though mistakenly, took to be another aspect of the underlying error of Nestorius.[19]

Gregory can occasionally be found using the more formal language of official definitions, usually in the context of a warning against error. For instance, he rejected the notion that Christ was made up of two persons:[20]

> Thus God the Father performed the nuptials of the Son when he united him to a human nature in the Virgin's womb, when he desired—[he who was] God before the ages—to become a man at the end of the ages. But because such a union usually takes place between two persons, we must firmly exclude the belief that the person of God and man, our Redeemer Jesus Christ, is united out of two persons. We say that he exists from two natures and in two natures but we avoid as sinful believing that he is composed of two persons.

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[13] *HEv.* 25.6 (CCSL 141:211).

[14] "sed huius incarnationis mysterium humanus oculus penetrare non sufficit. Investigare etenim nullatenus potest quomodo corporatur Verbum, quomodo summus et uiuificator spiritus intra uterum matris animator, quomodo is qui initium non habet, et existit et concipitus." *HEv.* 7.3 (CCSL 141:50); see also *HEv.* 22.8 (CCSL 141:188–89) and *HEv.* 25.6 (CCSL 141:211).

[15] ACO 2,1,6, pp. 151–62. For a translation, see Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, trans, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 3 vols., Translated Texts for Historians 45 (Liverpool, 2005), 1:173–77.

[16] ACO 1,1,4, pp. 15–20; see Price and Gaddis, *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 1:178–83.

[17] Ed. Carlos Silva-Tarouca, *Textus et Documenta* 9, pp. 20–33; for an English translation of the Greek translation read out at Chalcedon, see Price and Gaddis, *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 2:14–24.

[18] ACO 2,1,2, pp. 129–30; see Price and Gaddis, *Acts of Chalcedon*, 2:203–05.

[19] *Mor.* 1.18. 26 (CCSL 143:39); *Mor.* 18.52.85 (CCSL 143A:948); *HEz* 1.8.3 (CCSL 142:101–103); *Ep.* 11.52 (CCSL 140A:954–55).

[20] "Tunc enim Deus Pater Filio nuptias fecit, quando hunc in utero uirginis humanae naturae coniunxit, quando Deum ante saecula fieri uoluit hominem in fine saeculorum. Sed quia ex duabus personis fieri solet ista coniunxio, absit hoc ab intellectibus nostris, ut personam Dei et hominis Redemptoris nostri Iesu Christi ex duabus personis credamus unitam. Ex duabus quippe atque in duabus hunc naturis existere dicimus, sed duabus personis compositum credi, ut nefas, uitamus." *HEv* 38.3 (CCSL 141:361). All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

Here we catch an unexpected glimpse of Gregory's deeper and wider knowledge. Cyril of Alexandria had deployed the expression "from two natures" and the original draft of the Chalcedonian Definition had followed him; it was amended at the insistence of the papal legates to "in two natures", the form preferred by Leo the Great.[21] "In two natures" expressed the continued reality of the natures in the incarnate Christ more securely than "from", which was not immune to a "monophysite" interpretation.[22]

The use of the classical formulas has led Gregory here to depict Christ in strikingly compositional terms, as the union of divine and human in one person, rather than the divine Word taking up a second nature. Augustine and Leo usually offered accounts of Christ in which his person was the fruit of the union of the divine and human natures, while maintaining that his sole identity was the divine Word. Though Cyril did at times use compositional language, he preferred to speak of Christ as the *hypostasis* of the *Logos* incarnate, in which the *Logos* took on a human nature in his hypostasis.[23] But in the Formula of Reunion of 433, which healed the breach between Alexandria and Antioch caused by the Council of Ephesus of 431, Cyril endorsed a compositional account: Christ was the product of the union of two natures. Cyril was criticized sharply for this and repeatedly had to defend his acceptance of the Formula of Reunion, for instance in his letters to Succensus.[24] Cyril argued that the error of Nestorius was to posit two agents and two persons in Christ whereas he had acknowledged only one person but two natures. All of this was fresh

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[21] See Richard Price, "The Council of Chalcedon (451): A Narrative," in *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700*, eds Richard Price and Mary Whitby, Translated Texts for Historians, Contexts 1 (Liverpool, 2009), pp. 79–81. An example of Leo's use of the formula is his *Tractate* 28.3, "in unam personam gemina conueniente natura" (CCSL 138:141).

[22] One of Cyril of Alexandria's most controversial slogans was that Christ was "one incarnate nature of the divine Word" (μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη). To his critics, it appeared to mean that Christ had only one nature, either the divine nature or a mixture of the divine and human natures. This led them to accuse those of Cyril's supporters who rejected Chalcedon of being "Monophysites", believers in only one nature in Christ. In fact, Cyril must have meant something more like "concrete reality" by the word *physis* in this formula (see John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy, Its History, Theology, and Texts* [Crestwood NY, 2004], pp. 207–12), and his followers who turned the slogan into a battle-cry saw it as a defence against what they saw as Chalcedon's endorsement of a "Nestorian" account of Christ as two persons. For that reason, the term "Miaphysite" has been recently coined to describe their belief that Christ was one concrete reality.

[23] See Richard A. Norris, "Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria," *Studia Patristica* 13 (1975), 255–68.

[24] *ACO* 1,1,6, pp. 151–62; see Graham Gould, "Cyril of Alexandria and the Formula of Reunion," *Downside Review* 106 (1988), 235–52.

in the minds of the participants at the Council of Chalcedon where the Formula of Reunion and Leo's *Tome* were given official recognition and a Definition produced which described Christ as one *hypostasis* or *prosopon* "in two natures", plainly a compositional account. This proved unacceptable in Egypt and Palestine to those who saw in it a betrayal of Cyril and the triumph of Nestorianism. The schisms that followed have lasted for over 1600 years.[25]

Gregory's emphasis, by contrast, seems regularly to be that Christ has no other identity than the Son of God. For example, in a passage that could have come from the pen of Cyril:[26]

> Though he is one thing [*aliud*] from the Father and another thing [*aliud*] from the Virgin, he is not however one person [*alius*] from the Father and another person [*alius*] from the Virgin, but he is eternal from the Father and he is temporal from his mother. He who made is he who was made. He who is 'fairer than the children of men' (Ps. 45:2) through his divinity is also he of whom it was said, 'there is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there is no sightliness' (Is. 53:2), through his humanity. He is before the ages from his Father without a mother; he is at the end of the ages from his mother without a father. He is the temple of the builder and he is the builder of the temple. He is the author of the work and he is work of the author. Remaining one from both and in both natures, neither a mixture by the uniting of the natures nor twinned by the distinction of the natures.

The repeated emphasis on he (*ipse*), the single subject of all Christ's acts, is intended to assert his divine identity. It is the same God who is born eternally of the Father and who was born in time of the Virgin. Gregory

[25] For the sixth-century unfolding of these disputes, see Lucas van Rompay, "Society and Community in the Christian East," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, ed. Michael Maas (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 239–66.

[26] "Et quamuis ipse aliud ex Patre, aliud ex uirgine, non tamen alius ex Patre, alius ex uirgine, sed ipse est aeternus ex Patre, ipse temporalis ex matre; ipse qui fecit, ipse qui factus est; ipse *speciosus forma prae filiis hominum* (Ps 45:2) per diuinitatem et ipse de quo dictum est: *Vidimus eum et non erat aspectus; et non est species ei neque decor* (Is 53:2), per humanitatem. Ipse ante saecula de Patre sine matre, ipse in fine saeculorum de matre sine patre. Ipse conditoris templum, ipse conditor templi; ipse auctor operis, ipse opus auctoris; manens unus ex utraque et in utraque natura, nec naturarum copulatione confusus, nec naturarum distinctione geminatus." *Mor.* 18.52.85 (CCSL 143A:948–49); another example of the single subject using the "in two natures" formula, asserted in terms of double birth, is: *HEz* 1.8.24 (CCSL 142:115): "Unus quippe in utraque natura, quoniam qui Deus ante saecula exstitit, homo factus est in fine saeculorum."

was aware and approved of Cyril's *Twelve Anathemas*,[27] the fourth of which condemned the division of Christ's acts as though they were performed by two different personal agents and the last of which, as a corollary, insisted on the need to believe that God was born in the flesh and died in the flesh in Christ. He was as insistent as Cyril on the divine identity and agency of Christ, while being as careful as Cyril to avoid any distribution of Christ's acts as though they were performed by two persons—and more careful than Leo, whose attribution in the *Tome* of the divine and human acts to his two forms, divine and human, provoked accusations of Nestorianism at Chalcedon.[28]

Yet at the same time, Gregory is as emphatic as Augustine and Leo that Christ does have two full and distinct natures and that it is their union in Christ which brings salvation. Christ is described as participating in human nature,[29] which suggests that human nature is a universal in which he shares along with all other people, affirming his unity with all humanity. This is central to Gregory's thinking: it is Christ's humanity which provides the bond between God and the human race, by which people can be brought back into unity with God.

Though Gregory was clear that the union of divine and human in Christ happens at the level of his identity—it is the one person, the divine Word, who is both God and man—he could use dangerously misleading language to describe the union of the natures. For instance, he was attracted by the image of electrum, a mixture of gold and silver, to explain how Christ fused the divine with the human.[30] This is an unfortunate way of speaking, as it makes of Christ a new hybrid, neither truly God nor truly man, and envisages each of the natures changing in the mixture.[31] But this is not in fact Gregory's point. He was commenting on Ezekiel 1:27 and

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[27] *Ep.* 7.31 (CCSL 140:495); the *Twelve Anathemas* were attached to his third letter to Nestorius: *ACO* 1,1,1, pp. 33–42.

[28] See Bernard Green, *The Soteriology of Leo the Great*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford, 2008), pp. 217–22 and 228. For the debate at Chalcedon, see Price and Gaddis, *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 2:25–26.

[29] *Mor.* 30.21.66 (CCSL 143B:1536); *I Reg.* 1.86 (CCSL 144:103), 5.98 (CCSL 144:479), 6.110 (CCSL 144:611).

[30] *HEz.* 1.2.14 (CCSL 142:25–26). See also *Mor.* 18.1.5 (CCSL 143B:1398).

[31] Gregory was not alone in using misleading images. Origen likened the union of the soul and the *Logos* in Christ to iron in fire in *De principiis* 2.6.6 (GCS 22:145) and was followed by Basil the Great in a sermon on the Nativity (PG 31:1460). Gregory of Nyssa repeatedly used the image of a drop of vinegar lost in the ocean as an image of the relationship of the humanity with the divinity of Christ: *Antirrheticus* (GNO 3. 1:201); *Ad Theophilum* (GNO 3. 1:126); *Contra Eunomium* 3.4 (GNO 2:150). Both these famous images imply the blending and mutation of both elements.

needed to find a spiritual or theological significance in the vision of the man enthroned above the four living creatures, who is depicted as having the appearance of electrum: the Christological reading of the passage was compelling. It was not so much how the natures are united that caught Gregory's attention as the way the natures interact: the divine elevates the human while the human makes the divine accessible. In other words, Gregory was willing to risk talking about the natures mixing in order to articulate the salvific effect of the "exchange of properties" (*communicatio idiomatum*).[32]

In much the same way, Gregory used the language of indwelling to describe the relationship of the divine and human in Christ. This too is unfortunate, suggesting that the humanity is external and ultimately alien to the divinity, while the humanity's function is merely instrumental, rather like the space suit which allows the astronaut to walk on the moon. Gregory seems insensitive to these risks, readily using the image of the wall for Christ, inwardly God and outwardly the God Man.[33] He says that he takes up his flesh like a garment,[34] that he is both the Temple and the one who inhabits the Temple,[35] or that the form of a servant covers (*tegeret*) the divinity.[36] Christ is the lamp and the divinity is the flame that illuminates it.[37]

This inward-outward depiction of the relationship of the natures is perhaps revealing, as it is so casually adopted, but Gregory's delight in images should not be underestimated. The garment, the Temple and the lamp, display the reality contained within; the covering conceals it (*tego* can mean to conceal as well as to cover). The image of the defensive wall is more complex, since the Christian is on the inside of the wall with God's own nature, while the God Man is the external face of the wall defending

[32] At its simplest, this means that the properties of each nature can be predicated to the one person of Christ; it is thus equally true to say that Christ is God and Christ is a human. This allowed the Virgin Mary to be given the title Mother of God. At its more wide-ranging, it describes attempts to say how the human nature expresses the divine and the divine nature is communicated to the human. For the use of the *communicatio idiomatum* by Augustine, which plainly influenced Gregory, see Tarcisius van Bavel, *Recherches sur la Christologie de saint Augustin: l'humain et le divin dans le Christ d'après saint Augustin* (Fribourg, 1954), pp. 57–73.

[33] *HEz.* 2.2.5 (CCSL 142:228): "Murus est enim nobis intus est Deus, murus uero foris est Deus homo."

[34] *HEz.* 2.1.9 (CCSL 142:215).

[35] *Mor.* 33.16.32 (CCSL 143B:1701).

[36] *Mor.* 2.23.42 (CCSL 143:85).

[37] *HEv.* 34.6 (CCSL 141:304).

the Christian from the enemy. Gregory thought of Christ's humanity as both disclosing God and, for those unable to see, concealing him. Those who fail to believe in him might glimpse the divinity in his miracles but refuse to believe he is God when they see his humility and his sufferings.[38] In fact, of course, the humility is the most profound manifestation of the divinity.[39] Again, these images are offered not so much as an explanation of how the divine and human are united in Christ as of how they interact and work together.

Gregory thus showed a practical and soteriological interest in the composition of Christ's identity and natures rather than a speculative one. Nevertheless, his Christology was always securely based on the outcome of the late-4th and early-5th-century disputes; for instance: "Wisdom built herself a house when the only-begotten Son of God in himself created for himself a human body, with the mediation of a soul, in the womb of the Virgin."[40]

Gregory is alluding to Proverbs 9:1, and follows the traditional identification of Wisdom as the Son of God. He might have defined the house built by Wisdom as a human nature, but Gregory clearly prefers to regard humanity as a universal in which Christ shares; to describe the house as an individual human nature would run the risk of personifying it, turning Christ's humanity into a second person. Instead, with a characteristic concern with the concrete, Gregory prefers to describe the house as Christ's body, but to avoid the impression that it is therefore merely a shell inhabited by the divine Word, an external covering only and not really human, he inserts the phrase "with the mediation of a soul". The soul is thus depicted, as in the Cappadocians, as the meeting place of the Word and his material body: akin to the Word as spiritual, akin to the body as native to it.[41]

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[38] Discussing Song of Songs 2:9, *HEz.* 2.1.15: "Sed quia et diuina fecit, et humana pertulit, quasi per fenestras uel per cancellas ad homines prospexit, ut Deus et appararet ex miraculis, et lateret ex passionibus, et homo cerneretur ex passionibus, sed tamen esse ultra hominem ex miraculis agnosceretur."

[39] For this aspect of Gregory, see Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 172–73. For the idea that the humility of Christ, and especially the sufferings of Christ, were a manifestation of his divinity, see Paul Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2004).

[40] *Mor.* 33.16.32 (CCSL 143B:1701): "Sapientia quippe domum sibi condidit, cum unigenitus Dei Filius in seipso intra uterum uirginis mediante anima, humanum sibi corpus creauit."

[41] Following Origen, *De principiis* 2.6.4 (*GCS* 22:143) and 4.4.4 (*GCS* 22:354–55), Gregory of Nazianzus argues that Christ's soul is the bond between the *Logos* and his body in *Ep.* 101. 48–49 (SC 208:57).

The same idea can be found in a passage where, for once, Gregory's fascination with vivid images led to convolution to the point of obscurity. Discussing Job 39:18 ("When time shall be, she sets up her wings on high: she scorns the horse and his rider"), Gregory depicted the horse as the body, the rider as the soul, and the Word as riding upon the soul.[42] Again, the soul mediates between the Word and the material body, allowing them to be united.

The humanity that the Son of God has taken to himself is sinless. Following Augustine and Leo, he explained the sinlessness of Christ as the result of the virgin birth.[43] In other words, he accepted the Augustinian account of the transmission of original sin by sexual intercourse. Thus Christ shared in human nature but not in sin: "Nature was taken up by him, not guilt".[44] This did not, however, make Christ immune to the pains and sufferings of life inflicted on Adam as a penalty for his sin. Christ accepted them freely, not as a punishment.[45] He did this on account of his humility:[46]

> Among human beings, the only Son of God was made the perfect human being who did not have his own sins but undertook the thorns of our wickedness and lowered himself to be humbled for us even as far as his passion and to undertake in himself the fire of our tribulation.

Fire among thorns is an allusion is to Psalm 117 [118]:12, the last of the psalms of deliverance sung at the end of the Passover meal,[47] which lent itself readily to a Christological reading. Since Christ was guilty of no sin, his suffering and death could only be attributed to his freely undertaking them in humility. However, Gregory was in no way speculating that Christ might have chosen to lead a painless and immortal existence. In a suffering world, that would not have been consistent with the humility which is the most profound expression of his divinity. Instead, Christ was subject like everyone else to exhaustion, hunger, thirst, pain and even death.[48]

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[42] *Mor.* 31.23.42 (CCSL 143B:1578).

[43] *Mor.* 2.22.41 (CCSL 143:84–85); 11.52.70 (CCSL 143A:626); 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A:878).

[44] *Mor.* 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A, 878): "sumpta est ab illo natura, non culpa"; see also *Mor.* 18.52.84 (CCSL 143A:948); 24.2.2 (CCSL 143B:1189); 27.2.3 (CCSL 143B:1332); 30.21.66 (CCSL 143B:1536).

[45] *Mor.* 30.22.67 (CCSL 143B:1536–37).

[46] *HEz.* 1.7.10 (CCSL 142:89): "Inter homines enim perfectus homo factus est unicus Dei Filius, qui sua peccata non habuit, sed spinas nostrae nequitiae suscepit atque usque ad passionem pro nobis humiliari dignatus est, et in semetipso ignem tribulationis nostrae suscipere."

[47] Mark 14:26.

[48] *Mor.* 30.22.67 (CCSL 143B:1536); *HEz.* 2.1.15 (CCSL 142:219).

These are bodily afflictions. How far did Gregory acknowledge mental and emotional anguish in Christ? This was always difficult territory for early Christian writers, seeking to harmonize the perfection and the weakness of Christ. Gregory is bolder than most in exploring the experiences of Christ's mind and heart, trying to envisage Christ as simultaneously truly God and really human, and also a model of perfection.[49] Gregory attempted to reconcile the two by maintaining that Christ's sufferings were real, that they were controlled by the divine Word and that they did not disturb his tranquillity so that his endurance in suffering becomes a model for all Christians.[50] It is not quite the case that Gregory is saying that the divine Word limited Christ's sufferings to the level at which they could be endured or to the point at which they had to be sustained as an encouragement to others. Rather, he needed to insist that the Word was not removed from the experience of suffering, allowing it to happen:[51]

> The devil cannot shatter the mind of the Mediator of God and humanity with temptation. For he so lowered himself to undertake all this externally that his mind, inwardly adhering to his divinity, could remain unshaken. And if he is said when disturbed in spirit to have groaned, he did in his divine nature arrange how much he should be disturbed in his human nature, changelessly presiding over everything and yet showing himself changeable in satisfying weakness. And thus remaining tranquil in himself, he arranged whatever he did, even with a disturbed spirit, to show in his humanity what he had assumed.

This was a difficult balance to strike. If Gregory had excluded the Word from the equation and presented the humanity suffering and triumphing alone, he could have been accused of Nestorianism and its sister heresy

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[49] Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great*, 2:328–35, concluded that Gregory was docetic in his account of Christ's mental sufferings. The response from Joseph Lebon, "Le Prétendu docétisme de la Christologie de s. Grégoire le grand," *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 1 (1929), 177–201, is conclusive.

[50] Gregory was probably aware of contemporary eastern disputes concerning the reality of Christ's sufferings; see van Rompay, "Society and Community in the Christian East," pp. 253–54.

[51] "[Hostis] mentem tamen mediatoris Dei et hominum tentatione quassare non ualuit. Sic enim dignatus est haec exterius cuncta suscipere, ut tamen eius mens interius diuinitati suae inhaerens inconcussa permaneret. Qui et si quando turbatus spiritu infremuisse dicitur, ipse diuinitus disponebat quantum ipse humanitus turbaretur, immutabiliter omnibus praesidens et semetipsum mutabilem in satisfactione infirmitatis ostendens. Quietus ergo in semetipso manens, disposuit quidquid pro ostendenda humanitate quam susceperat etiam turbulentus fecit." *Mor.* 3.16.30 (CCSL 143:134–35).

of Pelagianism.[52] If Gregory had presented the Word as limiting the suffering, then Christ's human endurance would offer no encouragement to believers. Gregory thus wanted to say that the Word was ultimately in control of the suffering, allowing it to provide a model of perfection. Though the Word arranged it (*disponebat*) and the Word also arranged (*disposuit*) what he did even when disturbed to show the humanity he had undertaken, Gregory did not connect the two concepts and say that the Word only allowed his humanity to suffer as much as was needed to show that he is human. Much depends on the word *quantum*—"how much"—the Word arranged for the human nature to suffer. If translated "how greatly he should be disturbed in his human nature", for instance, the passage has an entirely different sense.

Gregory was wrestling, with limited success, with a problem all patristic writers found intractable. It is noteworthy, however, that his contribution lies not in holding the natures apart or in contrast with each other, but in cooperation with each other. This does not mean that the natures become confused in Gregory's account or that Christ's perfection makes him less than human. On the contrary, Gregory would clearly have seen Christ as more fully and truly human than anyone else who has ever lived.

This is apparent in his view of Christ's perfect knowledge. Christ's occasional admissions of ignorance were difficult for patristic writers as they suggested a gulf between his limited human understanding and the divine Word which spoke through his mind and voice in preaching and revealed itself through his actions. Gregory, like most of his predecessors, attributed

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[52] In the period 412–30, Augustine had a series of disputes with Pelagius, Caelestius and Julian of Eclanum which led him to clarify and systematize his ideas about sin and grace. Against them, he insisted that the Fall of Adam caused his descendants to inherit the guilt of his sin, so that they had to pay the double penalty of physical mortality and spiritual mortality, and to inherit concupiscence, the radical disorder of desire. Pelagianism was therefore taken to be the view that people are born sinless and have in principle the capacity to remain sinless, which reduced the work of Christ merely to offering guidance and encouragement, though in this form it was largely a construct of Augustine's polemic; see Bryn Rees, *Pelagius: A Reluctant Heretic* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1988). A connection between the Christology of Nestorius, which could be construed as depicting Christ's perfect humanity enduring temptation and suffering independently of his divinity, was made at a very early date by John Cassian in his *De incarnatione* (CSEL 17:233–391); but the connection was not accepted by others, notably Leo who had commissioned the work: see Green, *Soteriology of Leo the Great*, pp. 28–35. The fact that Nestorius offered shelter to Julian of Eclanum at Constantinople had lent spurious credibility to the accusation that he was a Pelagian. See Lionel Wickham, "Pelagianism in the East," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 200–13.

Christ's ignorance to his skill as a teacher or his need to act appropriately—questioning the doctors in the Temple at the age of twelve, for instance, rather than instructing them.[53] Unusually, Gregory discussed this problem directly at some length, in a letter to Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, who had written to Gregory for guidance on account of the fact that the opposite view (which Eulogius considered a heresy) was being widely promoted in Egypt.[54] He followed the usual route of pointing out that most cases where Christ asked questions suggesting ignorance were merely rhetorical questions to advance the conversation. The most important case of expressed ignorance was in response to the question about the Day of Judgement (Mt 24:36) where Christ replied that not even the Son knew the hour. Gregory claimed that Christ did know the hour but not *from* his human nature; he knew it *in* his human nature but only *from* his divine nature. This looks like subtlety to the point of sophistry but in fact the implications of it are considerable. Gregory was not explicitly excluding the possibility of human ignorance in Christ (that he must have known, for instance, of the eventual existence of Beijing) but he was certainly excluding the possibility of Christ knowing the mind of God through his human capabilities. Christ knew the mysteries of God in his divine nature and this informed his human mind. In other words, while holding the natures distinct, Gregory insisted on their interaction.

This is the central concern of Gregory's great mentors, Augustine and Leo, in their understanding of Christ as God incarnate. The natures are distinct but they correlate and cooperate. This preoccupation led both Augustine and Leo to choose Mediator as the most fruitful title for Christ, the Mediator in whom divine and human meet, in whom there is an exchange. Indeed, Gregory often draws the reader's attention to the contrast of the natures: "Impassible and suffering, immortal and dying, existing before time and yet being able to be temporal at the end of time".[55]

To Gregory, Christ's two forms, that of God and that of the servant (Phil 2:6–7), show him to be equal to the Father and less than the Father.[56] Christ is both the creator and created, the builder of the Temple and the

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[53] *HEz.* 1.2.3 (CCSL 142:18); see also *I Reg.* 3.17 (CCSL 144:212): "Nescire ergo dominum dicitur non ignorantia cognitionis sed praetextu simplicitatis."

[54] *Ep.* 10.21 (CCSL 140A:852–856). Further on the agnoete controversy and its setting, see Leslie S.B. MacCoull, "The historical context of John Philoponus's *De Opificio Mundi* in the culture of Byzantine-Coptic Egypt," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 9 (2006), 397–423.

[55] *Mor.* 18.52.85 (CCSL 143A:948): "impassibilis pati, et immortalis mori, et aeternus ante saecula temporalis posset esse in fine saeculorum".

[56] *Mor.* 30.21.66 (CCSL 143B:1536).

Temple.[57] He gives all things as God, he receives all things at the Father's hand as man.[58] He is called a lamb on account of his innocence, a lion on account of his power.[59] He is capable of dying through his human nature and capable of purifying through his righteousness.[60] He was dead through humility but immortal through divinity.[61] What he assumes in his human nature, he conquers in his divine nature.[62] He is beyond the world by the power of his divinity but confined to the Virgin's womb by the substance of his weakness.[63] He teaches the angels in heaven through his divinity but questions the doctors in the Temple.[64] He appeared visible through his humanity and remained invisible in his divinity.[65] He was of the earth through the substance of his humanity but invisible through the height of his divinity.[66] He was comprehensible through the flesh, incomprehensible through his divinity.[67] A man among others in humility, he was beyond all humanity in divinity.[68]

In this way, the natures are distinct but they work together for salvation. The human nature, in its humility, is the vehicle by which the divine makes itself known:[69]

> When the humility of the flesh was assumed, it brought no injury to the majesty because, so that he should both undertake what he was to save and yet preserve what he had, neither was the divine lessened by the humanity nor was the humanity consumed by the divine. Because, although it is said through Paul, 'Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God but emptied himself and took upon him the form of a servant' (Phil 2:6–7), for him to have emptied himself is to show himself visible

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[57] *Mor.* 18.52.85 (CCSL 143A:948–49).
[58] *Mor.* 2.37.60 (CCSL 143:97).
[59] *Mor.* 30.21.66 (CCSL 143B:1535–36).
[60] *Mor.* 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A:878).
[61] *HEz.* 1.7.10 (CCSL 142:89).
[62] *Mor.* 14.55.69 (CCSL 143A:741).
[63] *Mor.* 30.25.73 (CCSL 143B:1542).
[64] *HEz.* 1.2.3 (CCSL 142:18).
[65] *HEz.* 2.1.15 (CCSL 142:219).
[66] *HEz.* 2.1.4 (CCSL 142:210).
[67] *Mor.* 17.27.39 (CCSL 143A:874).
[68] *HEv* 25.2 (CCSL 141:206).
[69] *Mor.* 2.23.42 (CCSL 143:85): "Nec maiestati iniuriam assumpta humilitas carnis, quia et ut seruanda susciperet, nec tamen habita permutaret, nec diuina humanitate minuit, nec humana diuinitate consumpsit. Quia etsi per Paulum dicitur: *Qui cum in forma Dei esset non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo sed semetipsum exinaniuit formam serui accipiens* (Phil 2:6–7), ei semetipsum exinanisse est ab inuisibilitatis suae magnitudine se uisibilem demonstrasse ut serui forma tegeret hoc quod incircumscripte omnia ex diuinitate penetraret."

> from the greatness of his invisibility so that the form of a servant should cover that which penetrates all things without limit through his divinity.

This passage is more significant than it might immediately appear, for two reasons. First, it is vital that the unknowable God should be made accessible for salvation—as Gregory asked his congregation in a sermon, "How can I love one I do not know?"[70] In the incarnation, God made himself knowable.[71] This, for Gregory, is the true meaning of "emptying" (Gk. *kenosis*); it is always connected to revelation, self-communication, teaching.[72] Secondly, it is significant because it was precisely the humility of Christ's humanity which was the most fitting way for God to express himself to humanity. The self-emptying of the Son of God is manifested in the humble obedience and love of his human life.

This is stated at some length in one of Gregory's homilies, where he spoke of the meekness of God who came to deliver humanity from their sins, to suffer and not to show his power.[73] Gregory was very struck by the fact that Christ did not defeat evil by an assertion of power but by defenceless love. The loftiness of the divine nature was made low and its strength made into weakness to elevate humanity.[74] The righteousness of God is channelled through the innocent suffering of Christ. This is why the figure of Job was so compelling to Gregory and why he devoted his greatest work to an exposition of the Book of Job. Job was the wholly righteous and innocent man who suffered much but never fell back into pride or anger or self-pity, accepting everything from God in humble obedience. He is the perfect type of Christ the righteous victim. Righteousness is a divine quality, attributed to Christ's humanity.[75] Christ can thus present his perfect humanity before God to intercede on behalf of humanity and his perfect humanity will propitiate God's demand for righteousness from humanity.[76]

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[70] *HEv* 30.10 (CCSL 141:266).
[71] *Dial.* 4.1.4 (SC 265:20).
[72] *Mor.* 24.2.2 (CCSL 143B:1189–91); 34.23.54 (CCSL 143B:1770–71).
[73] *HEv* 16.1–4 (CCSL 141:104–07).
[74] *Mor.* 14.54.67 (CCSL 143A:739).
[75] *Mor.* 24.3.5 (CCSL 143B:1191–92).
[76] *Mor.* 24.3.5–6 (CCSL 143B:1191–93).

Salvation[77]

Gregory's account of the saving work of Christ is theandric: that is, it depends entirely on Christ's identity as human and divine, which enables and gives significance to his saving acts.[78] The union and interaction of divine and human in Christ reconciles humanity with God and allows for a reciprocal exchange in which humanity receives forgiveness, righteousness and love from God and humanity can make the perfect and sinless offering of Christ to the Father. It is the application of Gregory's Christology, so that the two form one coherent understanding of Christ. It is profoundly indebted to Gregory's *pedagogues*, Augustine and Leo, and to that extent is notably different from soteriologies, such as that of Cyril of Alexandria, where the humanity of Christ is depicted as the passive recipient of the divine life bestowed on it by the Word and instrumental as the means by which that divine life can be shared with believers. For Gregory, as for Augustine and Leo, it is the balance and interchange of the natures that matters, the two natures working together, both therefore active in the work of salvation. Gregory explained:[79]

> Now, to be scourged and smeared with spittle, to be crucified, to die and to be buried, these are not the work of God in his own nature but the work of sinful man, who has merited all these things through his sin. 'But he himself bore our sins in his body upon the tree' (1 Pet 2:4). He who always remains incomprehensible in his own nature has condescended to be comprehended in our nature and to be scourged, for if he had not taken upon himself that which belonged to our weakness, he could never have lifted us up to the power of his strength. So that therefore he might do his work, ... in order to

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[77] Though the most complete survey remains Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great* 2:336–47, he reads Gregory through the lens of later theology; Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 147–61 is a more sympathetic and subtle account.

[78] For the importance of the theandric underpinning of Christ's salvific acts in patristic thought, see Jean-Pierre Jossua, *Le Salut: incarnation ou mystère pascal chez les pères de l'Église de saint Irénée à saint Léon le grand* (Paris, 1968).

[79] *HEz.* 2.4.20 (CCSL 142:272–73): "Flagellari autem atque sputis illini, crucifigi, mori, ac sepeliri, non hoc in sua substantia opus Dei est, sed opus hominis peccatoris, qui haec omnia meruit per peccatum. *Sed peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum* (1 Pet 2:4). Et qui in natura sua manet semper incomprehensibilis, in natura nostra comprehendi dignatus est ac flagellari, quia nisi ea quae errant infirmitatis nostrae susciperet, numquam nos ad suae fortitudinis potentiam subleuaret. Vt ergo faciat opus suum, ... quia incarnatus Deus, ut nos ad suam iustitiam colligeret, dignatus pro nobis est tamquam peccator homo uapulare. Et alienum opus fecit ut faceret proprium, quia per hoc quod infirmans mala nostra sustinuit, nos qui creatura illius sumus, ad fortitudinis suae gloriam perduxit."

> gather us together to his justice, God incarnate condescended to be flogged for us as though he were a sinner. He did a work alien to him so that he might do his proper work, because in undertaking our evils in his weakness, he led us who are his creatures to the glory of his strength.

The paradoxes—enfleshed to make spiritual, humbled in order to lift up, visible to reveal the invisible, dead to give life[80]—are depicted here as the undertaking of a work foreign to God in order to accomplish a work characteristic of him. It is also a work foreign to the sinless humanity to endure the dreadful condition of the sinner, subject to violence and suffering and death, but whereas God cannot undergo suffering, the sinless human nature can. The two natures, divine and human, though so very different, work together to accomplish salvation; each undertakes in union with the other an alien work.

Closely connected with this idea of the human nature performing the divine work of salvation is the idea of Christ as the union of divine and human providing a way of returning to God:[81]

> He helped man, being made man so that, because there was no way open to mere man of returning to God, he might make a way of returning through the God-man. For we, mortal and unjust, were far away from the just and immortal one. But between the immortal and just one and us, mortal and unjust, the Mediator of God and humanity appeared, mortal and just, who might both experience death with men and justice with God. Because through our depth we were distant from the heights, he joined our depth with the heights in his one self, so that he might make a way of returning for us from himself, who united his heights with our depth.

This is a theandric account. Though Christ's mortality is an essential aspect of the humanity he shares with sinners, it is not Christ's death on which Gregory focuses but his uniting of the divine and human in himself.

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[80] Ibid. (CCSL 142:272): "Caro enim factus est ut nos spiritales faceret, benigne inclinatus est ut leuaret, exiit ut introduceret, uisibilis apparuit ut inuisibilia monstraret, flagella pertulit ut sanaret, opprobria et irrisiones sustinuit ut ab opprobrio aeterno liberaret, mortuus est ut uiuificaret."

[81] *Mor.* 22.17.42 (CCSL 143A:1121–22): "Ipse quippe adiuuit hominem factus homo, ut quia puro homini uia redeundi non patebat ad Deum, uia redeundi fieret per hominem Deum. Longe quippe distabamus a iusto et immortali, nos mortales et iniusti. Sed inter immortalem iustum et nos mortales iniustos apparuit Mediator Dei et hominum mortalis et iustus, qui et mortem haberet cum hominibus, et iustitiam cum Deo; ut quia per ima nostra longe distabamus a summis, in seipso uno iungeret ima cum summis, atque ex eo nobis uia redeundi fieret, quo summis suis ima nostra copularet."

The reversal of humanity's plight is an act of humility on the part of God, abandoning his majesty, expressed in the humility and patience of the suffering Christ.[82] Christ is the second Adam, humble and obedient, unlike the first Adam.[83] The human nature is thus aligned with the divine nature, doing the same work and effecting the divine purpose. While it might seem at first sight as though Christ's humanity is so very unlike his divinity in his fragility and mortality, it is in fact an image or manifestation of the divinity in human form. The flesh is used for salvation, especially the suffering in the flesh.[84] Incorruptibility is restored to the flesh by the Resurrection.[85]

It is in this way that Christ is the teacher whose example is the pattern of how to return to God. Since in his humanity he is the expression of the divinity, his words and actions reveal God. He delivers sinners from blindness by his teaching and example.[86] He came as a human being in order to be seen; he wanted to be seen so that he would be imitated.[87] Everything he did was for the instruction of humanity.[88] The likeness of God is restored through imitating Christ's humility and justice[89] and the imitation of Christ delivers from sin.[90]

In Christ, God and humanity are reconciled. Gregory understood that no sinner could achieve reconciliation with God, but the Mediator with his uniquely just human nature was the perfect intercessor:[91]

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[82] *Mor.* 20.36.69 (CCSL 143A:1054); 34.23.54 (CCSL 143B:1770–71).

[83] *Mor.* 3.14.26 (CCSL 143:131).

[84] *Mor.* 3.19.34 (CCSL 143:137).

[85] *HEz.* 1.4.3 (CCSL 142:49); *HEv.* 34.6 (CCSL 141:304).

[86] *Mor.* 20.36.69 (CCSL 143A:1054–55); 21.6.11 (CCSL 143A:1073–74); 24.2.2 (CCSL 143B:1189–90).

[87] *Mor.* 29.1.1 (CCSL 143B:1434).

[88] *HEz.* 2.2.6 (CCSL 142:228–29).

[89] *Mor.* 18.48.79 (CCSL 143A:942–43); *I Reg.* 2.106 (CCSL 144:176); *HEz.* 1.2.19 (CCSL 142:28–30).

[90] *HEz.* 1.2.19 (CCSL 142:28–30).

[91] *Mor.* 24.3.6 (CCSL 143B:1193): "Ac si aperte Mediator Dei et hominum dicat: Quia nullus hominum fuit qui coram Deo intercessor iustus pro hominibus appararet, memetipsum ad propitiandum hominibus hominem feci, et dum me hominem exhibui, in quo iusto homine hominibus propitiarer inueni. Et quia infirmitatem suscipiens Dominus, dum poenam nostram moriendo tolerauit, corruptionem nostram resurgendo mutauit, bene iste angelus mortalitatis nostrae flagella subiungit eorumque miseretur."

> And so the Mediator of God and humanity said openly: 'Because there was no one to be the just intercessor in the presence of God, I made myself a man in order to propitiate by humanity, and when I showed myself a man, in that just man I found I was propitiated by humanity.' And because the Lord undertook weakness when he bore our punishment by dying, he transformed our corruption by rising. This messenger fittingly subjugated the scourges of our mortality and had compassion upon them.

The passion of the incarnate Son is thus a living example of humility and sacrifice, as is all Christ's life.[92] Consequently, Christ's death can be seen as a sacrifice made in satisfaction for the sinner who cannot make satisfaction for himself,[93] appeasing the wrath of the Judge.[94] The seeds might be found here of a theory of substitutionary atonement, but that was far from Gregory's mind. For him, the reconciliation between God and humanity is achieved within Christ himself in the uniting of justice and mortality in one Mediator. He is quite clear that God could have found some other way of reconciling humanity with himself but chose to undertake the suffering of the world in his wounds.[95]

Christ's perfect humanity is thus an expression of his divinity. The true unlikeness is not between the divine majesty and the human vulnerability of Christ but between his sinlessness and the sinfulness of the world. Like many writers before him, not least Augustine, Gregory used medical imagery of Christ as the doctor applying homeopathic and allopathic remedies:[96]

> It is the practice of the doctor to cure sometimes by applying similar to similar, sometimes by applying contrary to contrary. For he is accustomed often to heal with hot to hot or cold to cold; or often [to heal] with cold to hot or hot to cold. Therefore our doctor, coming to us from above, finding us oppressed with so much feebleness, applied to us similar and contrary

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[92] *Mor.* 1.24.32 (CCSL 143:42–43); 22.17.42 (CCSL 143A:1121–22); 24.2.3–3.5 (CCSL 143B:1190–92).

[93] *Mor.* 3.14.27 (CCSL 143:132); 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A:877–78); *HEv.* 33.8 (CCSL 141:296).

[94] *Mor.* 9.38.61 (CCSL 143:500–01).

[95] *Mor.* 20.36.69 (CCSL 143A:1054–55); 34.23.54 (CCSL 143B:1770–71).

[96] *Mor.* 24.2.2 (CCSL 143B:1189): "Mos medicinae est ut aliquando similia similibus, aliquando contraria contrariis curet. Nam saepe calida calidis, frigida frigidis; saepe autem frigida calidis, calida frigidis sanare consueuit. Veniens ergo ad nos desuper medicus noster, tantisque nos inueniens laguoribus pressos, quiddam nobis simile, et quiddam contrarium apposuit. Ad homines quippe homo uenit, sed ad peccatores iustus. Concordauit nobis ueritate naturae, sed discrepauit a nobis uigore iustitiae." See also *HEz.* 1.2.9 (CCSL 142:22–23). This passage is very similar to Augustine's first great depiction of the Mediator as just and mortal in *Confessions* 10.42.68 (ed. Lucas Verheijen, *Confessionum libri XII*, CCSL 27 [Turnhout, 1981], p. 192).

> remedies. He came as a human being to human beings, but as a just man to sinners. He agreed with us in the truth of his nature but differed from us in the power of his justice.

Salvation was therefore understood by Gregory as the triumph and restoration of justice. Following ancient tradition, he expressed it in personified form as the overturning of the power of the devil. The devil has rights over sinful humanity as a result of the Fall.[97] In other words, sinners are justly under the penalty of death and damnation.[98] The victory over the devil must therefore be a triumph of justice, not simply of force; the victory of reason, not power.[99] When the devil killed Christ, he exceeded his own rights, as the sinless Christ was not subject to his legitimate rights over sinners.[100] This, exquisitely, was achieved by the devil's deceiving himself through his own pride. The devil simply could not believe that Christ's humility and humble sufferings were compatible with his being God and so concluded he was merely a man.[101] Gregory used the old image of the bait, humanity, catching the devil on the hook of Christ's divinity.[102] The deceiver deceived himself and lost his power, blinded by his own pride, a reversal of the Fall in which justice triumphed over power.

What, in practice, did this mean for Gregory? He followed Augustine in his account of the effects of the Fall. The descendants of Adam inherited from him the double death of the body and of the soul.[103] Through Christ's death and Resurrection, the latter could be forgiven by baptism and damnation averted, while the former would be surpassed in the glory of the Resurrection. But humanity also inherited from Adam concupiscence, disordered desire, by which the will was weakened[104] and flesh and spirit set at odds.[105] People are now attached to transitory goods and are constantly lamenting their loss.[106]

This is the territory where so much of Gregory's effort was expended, urging his hearers and readers to the life of stringent discipline through

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[97] *Mor.* 2.10.17 (CCSL 143:70); 2.22.41 (CCSL 143:84–85); 14.38.46 (CCSL 143A:725–27); 18.2.4 (CCSL 143A:887–88); 33.14.28 (CCSL 143B:1697–98).

[98] *Mor.* 11.17.26 (CCSL 143A:601–02).

[99] *Mor.* 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A:877–78).

[100] *Mor.* 17.30.47 (CCSL 143A:878–79).

[101] *Mor.* 2.22.41–42 (CCSL 143:84–85); 3.15.28 (CCSL 143:132–33); 3.20.38 (CCSL 143:139); 17.30.47 (CCSL 143A:878); *HEv.* 25.8 (CCSL 141:213–14).

[102] *Mor.* 33.2.14 (CCSL 143B:1672–73); *I Reg.* 1.5.10 (CCSL 144:422); *HEv.* 25.8 (CCSL 213–14).

[103] *Mor.* 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A:877–78); 19.1.2 (CCSL 143A:957); 29.10.21 (CCSL 143B:1448).

[104] *Mor.* 8.31.51 (CCSL 143:422).

[105] *Mor.* 9.5.5 (CCSL 143:458–59); 26.17.28 (CCSL 143B:1285–87).

[106] *Mor.* 8.32.54 (CCSL 143:424).

which the will could be re-educated.[107] Toil and struggle in working out salvation is the lot of the Christian,[108] who must be devoted to good works and penance.

To a later generation, this might have looked Pelagian. Gregory maintained that Christ's saving work was not complete and Christians had to work hard to win their salvation:[109]

> Something is indeed left over, because Christ did not fulfil everything for us. He certainly redeemed everyone by his cross, but it remains that the person who strives to be redeemed and to reign with him should be crucified with him. Indeed [Paul] saw what remained and said, 'If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him' (2 Tim 2:12), as if he said, 'What Christ fulfilled is not effective for him unless he completes what remains.' Hence the blessed apostle Peter said, 'Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his footsteps' (1 Pet 2:21). Hence Paul said, 'I fill up those things which are wanting in the passion of Christ, in my body' (Col 1:24).

It would be a mistake to read this as though Gregory regarded Christ's saving work as inadequate and the efforts of Christians as separate and supplementary to it. He is absolutely clear that Christ's passion and death have redeemed humanity; he is equally clear that the Christian is sharing in that passion as they strive to fulfil it—con-crucified with Christ. There is no discrete area of human activity in which salvation can be attained. Rather the Christian must work with Christ, following his example, enacting and making effective the salvation won in Christ's passion.[110]

This becomes more apparent when Gregory's understanding of the Church is examined. While he could call it the Kingdom of Heaven[111] or the garment of Christ,[112] he was very clear that the visible Church was an

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[107] *Mor.* 11.50.68 (CCSL 143A:624–26).

[108] *Mor.* 35.17.43 (CCSL 143B:1803–05).

[109] *I Reg.* 4.136 (CCSL 144:366): "Remansit quidem, quia non omnia nostra Christus expleuit. Per crucem quippe suam omnes redemit; sed remansit, ut, qui redimi et regnare cum eo nititur, concrucifigatur. Hoc profecto residuum uiderat, qui dicebat: *Si conpatimur, et conregnabimus* (2 Tim 2:12). Quasi dicat: 'Quod expleuit Christus, non ualet nisi ei, qui id quod remansit adinplet.' Hinc beatus Petrus apostolus dicit: *Christus passus est pro nobis, nobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamur uestigia eius* (1 Pet 2:21). Hinc Paulus ait: *Adinpleo ea, quae desunt passioni Christi, in corpore meo* (Col 1:24)."

[110] It echoes Augustine's often-repeated account of Christ suffering in the Church and its members, see *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 108.5 (CCSL 36:617–18); *De Trinitate* 3.10.20 (CCSL 50:148), 4.3.6 (CCSL 50:168); *Enarr. in Ps.* 36.3.4 (CCSL 38:270), 52.1 (CCSL 39:636), 61.4 (CCSL 39:774).

[111] *Mor.* 33.18.34 (CCSL 143B:1704).

[112] *Mor.* 20.29.58 (CCSL 143A:1046); 29.6.13 (CCSL 143B:1441–42).

assembly of sinners as well as saints. It is effectively a training ground, where the bad can be inspired by the example of the good and be converted from their sin, while the good have to strive against the temptations presented by the wicked.[113] He was repeatedly insistent that, despite the sins of its members, the Church is holy.[114] This is partly because it is a school of holiness, indeed the only means of holiness, but more fundamentally because it is holy with the holiness of Christ and after the Last Judgement it will be the Church of the saints, and all its members will be holy.[115]

The Church[116]

In what sense, then, is the Church the Body of Christ? Gregory regularly links the title Body of Christ with the assertion that the Church is one person with Christ in a phrase which echoes the classic formula that Christ is one person in two natures.[117] The Church mirrors Christ in his duality as well as his singularity. Gregory, interestingly, does not distinguish between Christ's mystical body, made up of the elect, and the external visible assembly which mixes the mystical body with sinners. Just as Christ is God and man, so the Church is Christ and Christians. Just as Christ is just and yet mortal, so the Church is pure but steeped in the suffering and corruption of the world. Just as Christ could not suffer as God but suffered in his human nature, so the Church is both glorious in heaven but suffering on earth:[118]

> But because at the start of this work, when we dealt with the unity of the head and the body, we sent ahead with watchful attention how much should be the union of love in them, because undoubtedly the Lord both

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[113] *Mor.* 20.39.76 (CCSL 143A:1059–60); 31.15.28 (CCSL 143B:1570–71); *HEv.* 38.8 (CCSL 141:367).

[114] *Mor.* 25.8.21 (CCSL 143B:1246); 26.41.76 (CCSL 143B:1322–23); *HEz.* 2.4.17 (CCSL 142:270–71); *HEv.* 38.8 (CCSL 141:367).

[115] *Mor.* 9.11.18 (CCSL 143:469); 20.17.43 (CCSL 143A:1034–35); 31.15.28 (CCSL 143B:1570–71).

[116] See Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great*, 2:405–14.

[117] *Mor.* Praef 14 (CCSL 140:19); 4.11.18 (CCSL 140:175–76); 19.14.22 (CCSL 143A:973–74); 20.3.8 (CCSL. 143A:1007–08); 23.1.2 (CCSL 143B:1145); 35.14.24 (CCSL 143B:1789).

[118] *Mor.* 3.13.25 (CCSL 143:130): "Sed quia in exordio huius operis dum de unitate capitis et corporis tractaremus, sollicita intentione praemisimus quanta in eis sit compago caritatis, quia nimirum et Dominus multa adhuc per corpus quod nos sumus, patitur et iam corpus eius, id est Ecclesia, de suo capite, uidelicet Domino, in caelo gloriatur. Ita nunc passiones exprimi eiusdem capitis debent ut ostendatur quam multa etiam in suo corpore sustinet."

> suffers greatly now through the body which we are, that is the Church, as he is glorified in his head, that is the Lord, in heaven. Thus now the sufferings of his head should be described so that how much he also sustains in his body might be shown.

To reinforce this image of the glorified head in heaven, who still suffers with his members in this world, Gregory quoted three important scriptural texts: Acts 9:4, when Saul on the road to Damascus heard the voice of Christ asking why he was persecuting him; Col 1:24 where Paul spoke about making up in his flesh those things that were wanting in the sufferings of Christ; and Eph 2:6 where Paul said that God has raised us up together and made us sit together with Christ in the heavens. When Christians are persecuted, Christ is persecuted. When Christians strive to follow the example of Christ, they fulfil his passion. In heaven, Christians are raised up and enthroned with Christ.

To conclude, Gregory's ecclesiology reflected his soteriology which in turn reflected his Christology. Everywhere, Gregory saw the balance and reconciliation of opposites through humility and love. The striving after perfection that Gregory urged upon his audience was a journey through humility to union with Christ, in whose humility human and divine were made one.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GREGORY'S ESCHATOLOGY[1]

Jane Baun

> For why, magnificent son, do you not realize that the world is at its end? Everything is under pressure every day. We are being led to the eternal and terrifying Judge to render our accounts. What then should we think about, other than his arrival?[2]

Thus Gregory the Great, writing in June 597, to Andrew, a friend seeking preferment at the court in Constantinople. The "last things", whether individual (death, judgement, heaven and hell) or universal (the Second Coming, Last Judgement, and consummation of all things), were never far from Gregory's mind.[3] Eschatological awareness weaves a matrix of stern expectation, aspiration, and motivation that undergirds Gregory's thought-world like a steel mesh.[4] Whether teaching, dispensing pastoral advice, responding to queries, ruling on papal matters, or writing to

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[1] Claude Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand. Culture et experience chrétiennes* (Paris, 1977), chs. 7–9, provides a masterful overview of Gregory's eschatology; Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), ch. 4, a thoughtful, elegant synthesis. Particular studies include Claude Dagens, "La fin des temps et l'Église selon S. Grégoire le grand," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 58 (1970), 273–88; Kevin Hester, *Eschatology and Pain in St. Gregory the Great: The Christological Synthesis of Gregory's* Morals on the Book of Job (Milton Keynes, 2007); Rade Kisić, *Patria caelestis. Die eschatologische Dimension der Theologie Gregors des Grossen* (Tübingen, 2011). This chapter, while informed by previous scholarly work, aims primarily to immerse the reader directly in Gregory's own words and images. Special thanks are due to Leen Van Broeck for expert assistance.

[2] *Reg.* 7.26, trans. in John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great* (Toronto, 2004), 2:480, modified (CCSL 140:482, ll. 14–17): "Cur enim, magnifice fili, non consideras quia mundus in fine est? Omnia urguentur cotidie. Ad reddendas rationes aeterno et tremendo iudici ducimur. Quid ergo aliud nisi de aduentu illius cogitare debemus?"

[3] This chapter will treat mainly universal eschatology; for Gregory's views on individual eschatology—judgement, heaven, and hell—see Dagens, *Saint Grégoire*, pp. 401–29; also Jane Baun, "Last Things," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 3, *Early Medieval Christianities, c.600–c.1100* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 606–24, and Isabel Moreira, *Heaven's Purge. Purgatory in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 85–94.

[4] Markus (*Gregory the Great*, p. 54) notes the lack of obvious predecessors or successors for Gregory's heightened eschatological sense among major Latin Church figures. For patristic context, especially the contrasts with Ambrose and Augustine, see Brian Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1991), chapters 8, 10, and 12; also Hester, *Eschatology and Pain*, pp. 15–20.

intimate friends, Gregory's conviction that all must face the Judge—*soon*—infused his every word and deed with urgency. Throughout his pontificate, Gregory's focus on the End and its implications for present-day behaviour was consistent, no matter who the audience; none escaped his call for increased eschatological mindfulness. In the first month of his pontificate (September 590), Gregory admonished Justin, praetor of Sicily, to keep the End in mind, as a sure defence against temptation:[5]

> Let no bribes draw you to injustice, and let neither threats nor friendship deflect you from the path of righteousness. Look at how brief life is, contemplate before what judge you are going to appear, and how soon, you who exercise judicial power.

Fearless in expressing the same message to both small and great, Gregory was liable to launch into motivational full-scale rehearsals of the Last Judgement whether writing fondly to friends or sternly to the emperor, fellow clerics, or aristocratic landowners.[6] His eschatological concern could be expressed in several different registers. Writing to intimates, such as his old friend, Rusticiana *patricia*, and her daughter Eusebia *patricia*, Gregory wrote with gentle, though still urgent, concern for their well-being. In June 603, Gregory admonished Rusticiana to:[7]

> Consider all things as transitory. You would then every day consider ceaselessly with fear and tears the terrifying trial of the Judge soon to come, and you should fearfully think again about that day on which all things are to be thrown into confusion, so that you no longer fear the anger of the Judge on the day itself.

Writing to Emperor Maurice in opposition to a new law, Gregory pulled no eschatological punches:[8]

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[5] *Ep.* 1.2, trans. Martyn, 1:120, modifed (CCSL 140:2, ll. 15–19): "Nulla uos lucra ad iniustitiam pertrahant, nullius uel minae uel amicitiae ab itinere rectitudinis deflectant. Quam sit uita breuis aspicite, ad quem quandoque ituri estis iudicem, qui iudiciariam potestatem geritis, cogitate."

[6] For example, *Reg.* 4.44, 3.61, 3.29, 4.23; see Martyn, *Letters*, 1:282 n. 205.

[7] *Reg.* 13.33, trans. Martyn, 3:849, modified (CCSL 140A:1035, ll. 9–13): "Transitoria esse omnia perpendat. Venturi iudicis examen tremendum cum metu et lacrimis cotidie sine cessatione consideret illumque diem, in quo perturbanda sunt omnia, cum timore ad animum reducat, ut iram iudicis in ipso iam die non timeat."

[8] *Reg.* 3.61, trans. Martyn, 1:281–82 (CCSL 140:210, ll. 48–59): "Requirat rogo dominus meus quis prior imperator talem legem dederit, et subtilius aestimet si debuit dari. Et considerandum ualde est quia eo iam tempore prohibentur quique relinquere saeculum, quo appropinquauit finis ipse saeculorum. Ecce enim mora non erit, et ardente caelo, ardente terra, coruscantibus elementis, cum angelis et archangelis, cum thronis et dominationibus, cum principatibus et potestatibus tremendus iudex apparebit. Si omnia peccata dimiserit,

> Let my Lordship inquire, I beg you, what previous emperor enacted such a law, and judge more carefully if it should have been enacted... now, at the very time when the end of the world itself has drawn nigh. For behold, there will be no delay, and as the Heavens blaze, the earth blazes and the elements flash, the terrifying judge will appear with angels and archangels, with thrones and dominions, and with principalities and powers. If he should pardon all sins, and say that this law alone was enacted against his will, what excuse will there be, I ask you? Therefore, I pray you through the same terrifying judge that all those tears, all those prayers, all that fasting, and all that almsgiving of my Lordship, should not for any reason be blackened before the eyes of almighty God.

Judgement weighs heavily in all four of Gregory's major letters to Emperor Maurice.[9] It is not surprising then, that Maurice seems at some point to have fought back with the same sort of eschatological rhetoric, when criticising Gregory's independent negotiations with the Lombards. In his most fraught letter to the emperor—a catalogue of the terrible failures of imperial policy in Italy—Gregory implies that Maurice had thrown the eschatological onus back onto the pope. This, he warns, with grim and startling frankness, is a dangerous game:[10]

> But as the piety of my Lordship threatens me with that fearful and terrible Judgement of almighty God, I beg you through the same almighty Lord not to do so any more. For we do not know as yet what sort of future each has there.... However I say this briefly, that as an unworthy sinner, I have more confidence in the mercy of Jesus when he comes than in the justice of your Piety. And there are many things which men do not know about His judgement, for perhaps he condemns what you praise, and what you condemn, he will praise.

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et solum hanc legem contra se dixerit prolatam, quae rogo erit excusatio? Vnde per eundem tremendum iudicem deprecor ne illae tantae lacrimae, tantae orationes, tanta ieiunia tantae que elemosynae domini mei ex qualibet occasione apud omnipotentis dei oculos fuscentur."

[9] Four short letters of request to Maurice have little or no eschatological content (*Reg.* 5.30, 6.16, 6.64, 7.6), but his four major letters, on the ban on soldiers' becoming monks (*Reg.* 3.61), Italian sufferings under the Lombards (5.36, 5.37), and the assumption by the Constantinopolitan patriarch of the title of ecumenical patriarch (5.37, 7.30), smoulder with eschatological rhetoric.

[10] *Reg.* 5.36, trans. Martyn 2:350 (CCSL 140:307, ll. 96–105): "Quia autem dominorum pietas illud mihi pauendum et terribile omnipotentis dei iudicium intentat, rogo per eundem omnipotentem dominum, ne hoc ulterius faciat. Nam adhuc nescimus, quis ibi qualis sit.... Hoc tamen breuiter dico quoniam peccator et indignus plus de uenientis iesu misericordia, quam de uestrae pietatis iustitia praesumo. Et sunt multa quae de iudicio illius homines ignorant, quia fortasse quae uos laudatis ille reprehendit et quae uos reprehenditis ille laudabit."

Gregory does not claim to know the mind of God better than Maurice; rather, he warns him off having too much certainty regarding the Last Things. When he cautions that "we do not know as yet what sort of future each has there," that "we" includes Gregory himself. Gregory's own stance regarding his own fate in the coming judgement is constantly one of dread, and extreme humility. Reference to the judgement represented for Gregory much more than simply a stick for keeping the flock in line: it welled up from a deep personal culture of contemplation and compunction, as the frequent self-reproaches and mentions of tears in his letters demonstrate. His reply to Maurice ends on a sombre, personal note:[11]

> And so among all this uncertainty I return to tears alone, praying that the same almighty God may rule both our most pious Lordship with his hand here, and in that terrible Judgement, may find him free of all sins, that he makes me please men, if it is necessary, in such a way that I do not offend against His eternal grace.

The Anger of the Judge—and His Mercy

The anger of the Judge and the terror of the judgement are frequent themes in Gregory's discussions of the End, whether in letters, homilies, or scriptural commentaries.[12] His magisterial *Moralia in Iob* offer particularly terrifying and detailed discussion.[13] No one can stand before the Almighty without trembling; in his presence, the wicked will stand instantly convicted, and their chastisement will be overwhelming, inexorable, and eternal.[14] Even the righteous, who have been chastised and purified on this earth by tribulations, have cause to fear the terrible judgement, which will exceed anything previously known to man.[15] A recent violent storm,

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[11] *Reg.* 5.36, trans. Martyn, 2:350–51 (CCSL 140:307, ll. 106–10): "Inter ergo omnia incerta ad solas lacrimas redeo, petens ut isdem omnipotens deus piissimum dominum nostrum et sua hic manu regat et in illo terribili iudicio liberum ab omnibus delictis inueniat et me ita placere, si necesse est, hominibus faciat, ut aeternam eius gratiam non offendam."

[12] This present study focuses on *HEv.* (see below) and *Mor.*; for the Ezekiel homilies (*HEz.*), see Scott DeGregorio, this volume, pp. 4–5, 18–21.

[13] *Mor.*, ed. Marc Adriaen, CCSL 143, 143A, 143B (Turnhout, 1979–85); scrupulous English trans. of PL 75–76 in [anon.], *Morals on the Book of Job*, Library of the Fathers (hereafter, LF), vols 18, 21, 23 (Oxford, 1844–50); excerpts from LF and new translations from CCSL (sometimes less faithful to the Latin than LF) in Manlio Simonetti and Marco Conti, eds, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Old Testament*, vol. 6, *Job* (Downers' Grove, IL, 2006); see also DeGregorio, this volume, pp. 11–15 and n. 25.

[14] *Mor.* 7.31.46–47, 14.33.79, 18.20.32–18.25.38.

[15] Among many mentions, *Mor.* 21.22.36.

which had uprooted an orchard, destroyed homes and churches, and killed many, provided Gregory the preacher with a useful measure of scale:[16]

> We must reflect that to bring these things about our unseen Judge caused the movement of a very slight breeze; he called a storm out of a single cloud and overthrew the earth, he struck the foundations of many buildings, causing them to fall. What will the Judge do when he comes in person, when his anger is burning to punish sinners, if we cannot bear him when he strikes us with an insignificant cloud? What flesh will withstand the presence of his anger... ? A tempest and fire accompany the severity of such strict justice, the tempest testing those whom the fire burns.

Gregory locates the source of divine anger in human sinfulness, a natural conclusion, given his thorough immersion in the Old Testament. Moreover, God's wrath at our sins is not reserved for the Last Judgement only, but expresses itself even now in the Lombard scourge and the natural disasters being suffered by Italy. Writing again to Maurice, in June 595, Gregory blamed above all his own sins and failures, and those of his fellow priests, not only for their lack of success in averting God's wrath, but also for their active role in bringing it upon the people (*Reg.* 5.37):[17]

> Or what sword of a most ferocious race would proceed violently and so cruelly to destroy the faithful, if the lives of us who are called priests, and are not priests, were not weighed down by most wicked deeds? But while we leave what is appropriate for us and consider what is inappropriate for us, we associate our sins with barbarian forces. Our sin has sharpened the enemy's swords.

Gregory has no doubt that the sufferings of the present time result in part directly from human sinfulness, and that the life of each Christian must be spent in repentance and reparation, a life that he modelled in full.

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[16] *Homilia in Evangelia* (hereafter, *HEv.*) 1.6. Latin text ed. Raymond Étaix in CCSL 141 (Turnhout, 1999); English trans. of PG 76 in David Hurst, *Gregory the Great. Forty Gospel Homilies* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990); this quotation at p. 19. (CCSL 141:10, ll. 124–37): "Sed considerandum nobis est quod ad haec agenda inuisibilis iudex uenti tenuissimi spiritum mouit, unius procellam nubis excitauit et terram subruit, casura tot aedificiorum fundamenta concussit. Quid ergo iudex iste facturus est cum per semetipsum uenerit et in ultionem peccatorum ira eius exarserit, si portari non potest cum nos per tenuissimam nubem ferit? In irae eius praesentia quae caro subsistit... ? Districtionem quippe tantae iustitiae tempestas ignis que comitantur, quia tempestas examinat quos ignis exurat."

[17] *Reg.* 5.37, trans. Martyn 2:351 (CCSL 140:308, ll. 11–16): "Aut quis ferocissimae gentis gladius in nece fidelium tanta crudelitate grassaretur, nisi nostra uita, qui sacerdotes nominamur et non sumus, a prauissimis grauaretur operibus? Sed dum nos competentia nobis relinquimus et nobis incompetentia cogitamus, peccata nostra barbaricis uiribus sociamus, et culpa nostra hostium gladios exacuit."

He expresses hope that sufferings borne patiently and faithfully in this life may serve as penance to lessen the severity of the final judgement. In another letter to Maurice written in the same month, Gregory sets the heavy blows of a failed truce, famine, and the slaughter and enslavement of his flock in this context (*Reg.* 5.36):[18]

> For I am human and a sinner, and because every day I transgress incessantly before almighty God, I suspect that there is a remedy for this for me before the fearful Judgement, if each day I am beaten by incessant blows.

Human sin invites punishment and suffering, whether in this life or the next, but suffering is not always the result of human sin. Throughout his great commentary on the Book of Job, Gregory vigorously defends the blamelessness and righteousness of Job against the three friends who accuse him. The example of Job provides Gregory with an opportunity to explain that, while most sufferings follow naturally from the sinful inclinations and actions of fallen man, suffering and chastisement can also afflict the blameless and the righteous, especially as the End approaches and Antichrist steps up his activity.

Job presents Gregory with a model of the afflictions of the righteous on three different levels: as a figure of the individual Christian, of Christ himself, and of holy Church.[19] In Job's experience Gregory plumbs an allegorical depth that both foreshadows and illuminates past, present, and future events. In Gregory's hands, every verse of the ancient text resonates with moral and spiritual edification for the present-day hearer—in the first instance, those Roman monastic exiles who gathered around him for Bible study in Constantinople. As Gregory works systematically through the biblical story, Job's longing for release from his present torments and restoration to his former life, and his perplexity at the meaning and purpose of his experiences, give voice to the parallel longings of Gregory's circle of Italian exiles. They were indeed living this Scripture.

Eschatology provides in Gregory's exegesis of Job, as in his letters and in his homilies, the ultimate interpretative key which can unlock the meaning of human experience, giving purposeful shape to the kind of personal and collective afflictions with which Italians in the later 6th century were

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[18] *Reg.* 5.36, trans. Martyn, 2:349 (CCSL 140:306, ll. 66–71): "Ego enim peccator homo sum et, quia omnipotenti deo incessanter cotidie delinquo, aliquod mihi apud tremendum examen illius esse remedium suspicor, si incessantibus cotidie plagis ferior."

[19] Simonetti and Conti, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, pp. xxiv–v; of Christ, esp. *Mor.* 3.14.26; of the Church, *Mor.* 8.10.23, 20.2.22–0.3.9, 20.18.44–20.21.47.

so familiar. His eschatological exegesis of Job lifts the book above all the unresolved questions that plague a literal reading, offering the believer a life's model, and a way of understanding, that can turn doubt into trust, lament into praise, desolation into consolation, and despair into hope.

In his commentary on Job, as well as in his Ezekiel and gospel homilies, more so than in his letters, Gregory tends to balance the fear of judgement and hell with a pastorally-minded hope of heaven as a motivating force. He speaks movingly of the Christian longing for the heavenly homeland (*patria caelestis*), and of the good things prepared for those who love God.[20] A homily on the parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:6–13) glows with compassion and hope, assuring those who long for the heavenly home and repent in this life that, "We won't be long in weeping, because the joys that last will quickly cleanse away our fleeting tears."[21] In an otherwise stern homily on Luke's apocalypse, Gregory expands on Jesus' encouraging words to the elect (Luke 21:28) with a counsel of joy:[22]

> *When these things begin to take place, look up and lift your heads, because your redemption is coming near.* Truth is exhorting his elect by saying, "When the disasters of the world become more frequent, when the outraged powers reveal the terror of judgement, lift up your heads, that is, let your hearts exult! While the world which is not your friend is coming to an end, the redemption you have sought is coming near." In Holy Scripture, "head" often means "mind", because as the head controls our members, so the mind organizes our thoughts. To lift up our heads, then, is to direct our minds to the joys of our heavenly homeland. Those who love God are ordered to rejoice and be merry at the world's end. They will soon find him whom they love, while what they have not loved is passing away.

Although so much of Gregory's eschatological rhetoric was intended to stir up fear and a sense of urgency, the last word for Gregory on the Last Things was however the patience and mercy of God, and confidence

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[20] On Gregory's longing for the heavenly home (*caeleste desiderium*), see Dagens, *Saint Grégoire*, pp. 387–92; Kisić, *Patria caelestis*, pp. 117–41.

[21] *HEv.* 31.8, trans. Hurst, p. 255 (CCSL 141:276, ll. 178–79): "Nec mora erit in fletibus, quia tergent citius transeuntes lacrimas gaudia mansura."

[22] *HEv.* 1.3, trans. Hurst, pp. 16–17 (CCSL 141:7, ll. 46–58): "His autem fieri incipientibus, respicite et leuate capita uestra, quoniam appropinquat redemptio uestra. Ac si aperte Veritas electos suos admoneat dicens: Cum plagae mundi crebrescunt, cum terror iudicii uirtutibus commotis ostenditur, leuate uos capita, id est exhilarate corda, quia dum finitur mundus cui amici non estis, prope fit redemptio quam quaesistis. In scriptura etenim sacra saepe caput pro mente ponitur, quia sicut capite reguntur membra, ita cogitationes mente disponuntur. Leuare itaque est capita mentes nostras ad gaudia patriae caelestis erigere. Qui ergo Deum diligunt, ex mundi fine gaudere atque hilarescere iubentur, quia uidelicet eum quem amant mox inueniunt, dum transit is quem non amauerunt."

in Jesus Christ as both advocate and judge. The heart of God longs for our return, and does not rejoice in the justice that he must exact. "What tongue," marvels Gregory at the close of a stern homily on the workers in the vineyard, "can describe the heart of the divine mercy? What mind is not amazed by the riches of such great love?"[23] Gregory counsels the sinner never to lose heart, since we have "as our helper the Mediator between God and men."[24]

Reading the homilies in the light of the heavy heart of the letters, it seems that in preaching to his flock, Gregory reassures himself as well:[25]

> Look at the liberality of heavenly love, and come with tears to your merciful judge, while he is still waiting for you. Keep in mind that he is just, and do not disregard your sins; keep in mind that he is kindly, and do not lose hope. The human God offers humans confidence with God. There is great hope for us if we repent, because our advocate has become our judge.

Scripture and Signs

Gregory's firm eschatological conviction was based on close reading of two sources side-by-side: the Scriptures, and the signs of the times. Founded on deep knowledge of the whole range of biblical eschatology, his writing is lent extra force by his observation of current events. It was only in the context of biblical prophecy and eschatology that current events made sense. While his contemporaries viewed invasion, atrocity, plague and natural disaster as new, strange, unprecedented, and unpredictable events, for Gregory they seemed all too old, familiar, and predictable, signs of a world groaning in its old age. Writing in April 593 to the Milan clergy during their exile in Genoa, he observed that Italians were now living a life straight out of the Bible:[26]

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[23] *HEv.* 19.3, trans. Hurst, p. 85 (CCSL 141:151, ll. 213–15): "Quae ergo lingua narrare uiscera diuinae misericordiae sufficit? Quis spiritus tantae pietatis diuitias non obstupescat?"

[24] *HEv.* 36.13, trans. Hurst, p. 325 (CCSL 141:346, ll. 376): "habemus Mediatorem Dei et hominum adiutorem nostrum"; on Christ as mediator, see Kisić, *Patria caelestis*, pp. 146–81.

[25] *HEv.* 34.18, trans. Hurst, p. 299, modified (CCSL 141:319, ll. 531–37): "Largitatem supernae pietatis aspicite et ad misericordem iudicem, dum adhuc exspectat, cum lacrimis uenite. Considerantes namque quod iustus sit, peccata uestra nolite negligere, considerantes uero quod pius sit, nolite desperare. Praebet apud Deum homini fiduciam Deus homo. Est nobis spes magna paenitentibus, quia aduocatus noster factus est iudex noster."

[26] *Reg.* 3.29, trans. Martyn 1:255 (CCSL 140:175, ll. 36–42): "Ecce iam mundi huius omnia perdita conspicimus, quae in sacris paginis audiebamus peritura. Euersae urbes, castra eruta, ecclesiae destructae, nullus in terra nostra cultor inhabitat. In nobis ipsis paucis-

> Look, we now see everything in this world destroyed, as we heard in the Holy Scripture that it would perish. Cities have been sacked, fortresses razed to the ground, churches destroyed and no farmer inhabits our land. A human sword is raging incessantly against the very few of us who have been left behind for the time being, with disastrous blows from above. Thus we look at the evils of the world that we have long heard were to come; the very destruction of the world has come to look like the pages of our scripture.

Preaching on Luke (21:25–33), probably on the first Sunday of Advent in November 590 at St. Peter's, Gregory asserted that all the signs of the End predicted in the gospels were now evident:[27]

> We see some of these things already coming to pass, and dread that the rest are soon to follow. We see nation rising up against nation and the distress that follows on the earth, more now in our day than we have read about in books. You know how often we have heard from other parts of the world that earthquakes have destroyed countless cities; we have suffered pestilence without relief; we do not yet clearly see the signs in the sun and moon and stars, but from the change in the air now we gather that these too are not far off. Before Italy was handed over to be struck by the pagans' sword, we saw fiery flashes in the sky indicating the blood of the human race that was later shed. No new confusion of sea and waves has yet welled up. But when many of the things foretold have already come to pass, there is no doubt but that even the few that remain will follow, for the accomplishment of things past is a clear indication of things to come.

The end times were hastening not only in Italy, however; writing to Æthelbert of Kent, on 22 June 601, Gregory warns the English king that,[28]

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simis, qui ad modicum derelicti sumus, cum supernae percussionis cladibus humanus gladius incessanter saeuit. Mundi igitur mala quae dudum uentura audiebamus, aspicimus; quasi paginae nobis codicum factae sunt ipsae iam plagae terrarum."

[27] *HEv.* 1.1, trans. Hurst, pp. 15–16, modified (CCSL 141:6, ll. 13–27): "Ex quibus profecto omnibus alia iam facta cernimus, alia e proximo uentura formidamus. Nam gentem super gentem exsurgere earum que pressuram terris insistere plus iam in nostris tribulationibus quam in codicibus legimus. Quod terraemotus urbes innumeras subruat, ex aliis mundi partibus scitis quam frequenter audimus. Pestilentias sine cessatione patimur. Signa uero in sole et luna et stellis adhuc aperte minime uidimus, sed quia et haec non longe sint ex ipsa iam aeris immutatione colligimus. Quamuis priusquam Italia gentili gladio ferienda traderetur, igneas in caelo acies uidimus et ipsum qui postea humani generis fusus est sanguinem coruscantem. Confusio autem maris et fluctuum necdum noua exorta est. Sed cum multa iam praenuntiata completa sunt, dubium non est quod sequantur etiam pauca quae restant, quia sequentium rerum certitudo est praeteritarum exhibitio." For dating, see CCSL 141:lxx.

[28] *Reg.* 11.37, trans. Martyn, 3:784 (CCSL 140A:931, ll. 46–49): "... praesentis mundi iam terminus iuxta est et sanctorum regnum uenturum est, quod nullo umquam poterit fine terminari. Appropinquante autem eodem mundi termino multa imminent quae antea non

> The end of the present world is now close at hand, and the kingdom of saints is about to come, and it will not be possible for their kingdom ever to be terminated with any end. And as the same end of the world is approaching, many things threaten us that did not exist before, namely changes in the air and terrors from the sky and tempests, contrary to the order of the seasons, as well as wars, famines, plagues and earthquakes in many places.

Taking his cue from the gospels, Gregory advised Æthelbert, however, "not to be perturbed," since the End would not come just yet.[29] Gregory's letter paraphrases parts of the "synoptic apocalypse," Jesus' narration of the end times common to the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21). In general, Gregory's letters and gospel homilies tend to follow the synoptic apocalypse rather than the Apocalypse of John (Revelation), which he saves for the *Moralia*. Gregory's usual list of the signs of the End includes items from the standard synoptic list—wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, terrors and great signs from heaven—seemingly from memory, rather than as an exact quotation from any one Gospel.[30]

Gregory tackles gospel eschatology head on in many of the gospel homilies, preaching to mixed congregations in various Roman churches at the beginning of his pontificate. Throughout the gospel homilies, Gregory's teaching is consistent with that of the letters, although whereas the letters stress judgement, the homilies tend to stress the desire of a loving God not to condemn. One common theme, found also in *Reg.* 13.33 to the *patricia* Eusebia, is announced in the second sentence of Gregory's Advent homily on Luke: we must learn to fear God now, before the End, so that we will not have to fear him as judge at the End.[31] The Advent sermon begins and concludes on this same note:[32]

> Our Lord and Redeemer, wanting to find us ready, denounced the evils that would accompany the ageing world in order to restrain us from loving it.

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fuerunt, uidelicet immutationes aeris terroresque de caelo et contra ordinationem temporum tempestates, bella, fames, pestilentiae, terrae motus per loca."

[29] *Reg.* 11.37, trans. Martyn, 3:784 (CCSL 140A:931, ll. 51–55): "nullomodo uestrum animum perturbetis."

[30] Matt. 24:6–7; Mark 13:7–8; Luke 21:9–11.

[31] *Reg.* 13.33 to *patricia* Eusebia (CCSL 140A:1035, ll. 9–13).

[32] *HEv.* 1.1, trans. Hurst, p. 15, modified (CCSL 141:5–6, ll. 1–6): "Dominus ac Redemptor noster paratos nos inuenire desiderans, senescentem mundum quae mala sequantur denuntiat, ut nos ab eius amore compescat. Appropinquantem eius terminum quantae percussiones praeueniant innotescit, ut si Deum metuere in tranquillitate non uolumus, uicinum eius iudicium uel percussionibus attriti timeamus." *HEv.* 1.6, trans. Hurst, p. 20 (CCSL 141:11, ll. 153–55): "Aduentum namque aeterni iudicis tanto securiores quandoque uidebitis, quanto nunc districtionem illius timendo praeuenitis."

> He made known what great disruptions would precede its approaching end so that if we chose not to fear God during peacetime, when we were struck by its disruptions we would be afraid of this judgement when it was near. (*HEv.* 1.1)
>
> The more you now anticipate his severity by fear, the more securely will you behold the coming of your eternal Judge. (*HEv.* 1.6)

Nearly three in four of the gospel homilies conclude with some reference to the coming judgement, with its threat of final condemnation and eternal punishment, and an exhortation to repentance and good deeds. This is true even of homilies that have few other apocalyptic references. A third of the homilies treat lessons usually assigned to Advent, pre-Lent, and Lent—traditional times to consider repentance and judgement—but judgement was a year-round theme for Gregory. The flock enjoyed a brief break from the topic in Eastertide, but Ascension found him firmly back in eschatological mode, expounding a theme which also occurs frequently in the *Moralia*, that of the absolute proportionality of divine grace and justice, expressed here as a contrast between mildness and terror, gentleness and strictness, patience and swift judgement:[33]

> We must consider very carefully that he who was mild at his ascent will be terrible at his return. He will demand from us with great strictness whatever he has commanded of us with gentleness. Let no one take lightly the time of repentance granted us, let no one neglect to have concern for himself while he can do so, because our Redeemer will come with great strictness in proportion to the great patience he has shown us before the Judgement.

The feast days of martyrs, for which ten of the gospel homilies were preached, also put Gregory in an eschatological mood, since the martyrs were models of those who had passed through the great tribulation and already enjoyed the Kingdom.[34] Gregory counsels his congregation to seek the holy martyrs,[35]

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[33] *HEv.* 29.11, trans. Hurst, p. 234 (CCSL 141:254, ll. 241–47): "Et hoc nobis magnopere perpendendum, quia is qui placidus ascendit terribilis redit, et quidquid nobis cum mansuetudine praecepit, hoc a nobis cum districtione exigit. Nemo ergo indulta paenitentiae tempora paruipendat, nemo curam sui, dum ualet, agere negligat, quia Redemptor noster tanto tunc in iudicium districtior ueniet, quanto nobis ante iudicium magnam patientiam praerogauit."

[34] Markus, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 59–62, discusses the especial significance for Gregory of the martyrs' legacy.

[35] *HEv.* 32.8, trans. Hurst, p. 266 (CCSL 141:286, ll. 241–47): "Hos ergo adiutores uestrae orationis quaerite, hos protectores uestri reatus inuenite, quia ne punire peccatores debeat rogari uult et ipse qui iudicat. Vnde et tam longo tempore comminatur iram, et tamen misericorditer exspectat."

> as helpers in your prayer, find them protectors in your guilt. Even the one who is Judge wants to be asked so that he won't have to punish sinners. For this reason he threatens us with his anger over so long a period of time, and yet waits for us with mercy.

In his mercy, and in his good time, God is waiting patiently for our repentance, but in the meantime, in our time, the End hastens. In several homilies, Gregory personifies the world, clearly in its last age:[36]

> So too the world was strong in its early years, as in its youth: lusty in getting offspring for the human race, green in its physical health, teeming with a wealth of resources. Now it is weighed down by its old age, and it is pressed by its increasing troubles as if towards an impending death.

These troubles offer only a foretaste of how terrible the End will be, and how complete the destruction of this world. This world was clearly doomed—it had outlived its usefulness and would be conclusively shattered; to love any part of it was folly.[37]

The Elect and their Tribulations

In Gregory's view, the tribulations of the elect which presage the End had already begun, in Italy and elsewhere, providing an invaluable rehearsal for the last days. This conviction drives all of Gregory's exegetical works. The manifold tribulations of Job serve in the *Moralia* as a type of the afflictions that beset holy Church and her elect, tormented by persecution, false witness, false prophets and preachers, Satan, and Antichrist. Job's laments are those of holy Church and the elect, as they search their hearts and souls in anticipation of the dread judgement.[38]

Who are these elect, and how did they become so chosen? Their true identity will be revealed only at the judgement, when all will become known.[39] Not everyone who belongs to the Church in her earthly mani-

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[36] *HEv.* 1.5, trans. Hurst, pp. 18–19, modified (CCSL 141:9, ll. 110–14): "Ita mundus in annis prioribus uelut in iuuentute uiguit, ad propagandam humani generis prolem robustus fuit, salute corporum uiridis, opulentia rerum pinguis; at nunc ipsa sua senectute deprimitur et quasi ad uicinam mortem molestiis crescentibus urgetur."

[37] Markus (*Gregory the Great*, p. 53) finds Gregory even more pessimistic than Augustine, who at least had anticipated the regeneration of this world.

[38] The theme pervades the *Mor.*; particularly concentrated statements in bks 4, 6, 13 (esp. §44–46), 14 (esp. §26–28), 15, 19 (esp. §15–18), 20 (esp. §44–47), 28, 29; for *Mor.*'s presentation of the role of redemptive pain in salvation, see Hester, *Eschatology and Pain*, esp. pp. 71–82.

[39] *Mor.* 22.8.18–19.

festation will be chosen: some will fall by the wayside, unable to endure tribulation, and others who currently serve the Church as teachers and leaders will be revealed as secret vessels of Antichrist:[40]

> For the cause of Antichrist is continually promoted among the ungodly, because he is even now secretly working his mystery in their hearts. And even if many, now seemingly established within the Church, pretend to be what they are not, they will yet at the coming of the Judge be exposed, as they are.

The elect may be recognized by their compunction, tears, humility, disregard of earthly things and love of things heavenly, daily self-examination, sacrificial self-offering and, especially, by the fire of love for God and desire for eternity that burns in their hearts, kindled by the Spirit.[41] Like Job, they have been chosen by God to be bruised, chastened and corrected on earth by infirmity and tribulations, purified by sufferings on this earth, so as to be able to bear him at the last:[42]

> For suffering is here the portion of the elect, so they may be trained for the rewards of their heavenly inheritance. It is our portion to receive stripes here, for whom an eternity of joy is reserved. Hence it is written, "*He scourges every son whom he receives*" (Heb 12:6).
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> For the Lord doubtless turns into sorrow the life of him whom He has filled with His illumination; and the more He suggests to the enlightened mind eternal punishments, the more cruelly does He weary it with sorrow for its past wickedness.[43]

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[40] *Mor.* 29.7.17, trans. LF 3:313 (CCSL 143B:1445, ll. 105–10): "Apud iniquos namque cotidie res antichristi agitur, quia in eorum cordibus mysterium suum iam nunc occultus operatur. Et si multi nunc specie tenus intra Ecclesiam constituti simulant se esse quod non sunt, in aduentu tamen iudicis prodentur quod sunt..."

[41] *Mor.* 15.10.12–25.13.16; *HEv.* 30.5 (CCSL 141:260, ll. 121–26): "Bene ergo in igne apparuit Spiritus, quia ab omni corde quod replet torporem frigoris excutit et hoc in desiderio suae aeternitatis accendit."

[42] See esp. *Mor.* 6.22.39–6.24.41, 24.11.34–24.12.35, 26.21.37, 27.19.39–27.21.41; quotation at 26.21.37, trans. LF 3:161 (CCSL 143B:1294, ll. 4–7): "Electorum namque est hic conteri, ut ad praemia debeant aeternae hereditatis erudiri. Nostrum est hic flagella percipere, quibus seruatur de aeternitate gaudere. Hinc enim scriptum est: *Flagellat omnem filium quem recipit.*"

[43] *Mor.* 27.19.39–41, quotation at §39, trans. LF 3:228 (CCSL 143B:1360, ll. 1–5): "Quem enim Dominus illustrando repleuerit, eius uitam proculdubio in lamentum uertit; atque illuminatae menti quo magis aeterna supplicia insinuat, eo hanc durius de transacta nequitia gemitibus fatigat." Cf. trans. in Simonetti and Conti, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, p. 190, reading "God" for *dominus* and "soul" for *mens*: "Certainly God transforms into tears the life of him whom he filled with his illumination, and the more he reminds the illuminated soul of eternal punishments, the harder he submits it to the groans for its past wickedness."

Gregory in the *Moralia* returns frequently to the description of the elect as those who, through God's grace, glow with the fire of love and longing for God, and the light of Christ, often in contrast to the wicked and damned, who dwell in an inner darkness that nothing can illumine.[44] Their illumination and Christ-likeness will be consummated at the last day, when holy Church and her elect will arise in splendour like the dawn.[45]

Although the virtues characteristic of the elect, and the moral and spiritual imperative to live those virtues, comprise a favourite topic in the *Moralia*, Gregory never suggests that one may "earn" election through one's own merits or efforts. It is only through grace that the elect are enabled to cooperate with grace, should they choose, of their free will, to do so.[46] And none should presume certainty as to his own status, or that of others—an oft-repeated theme in the homilies, which emphasize the hidden nature of the identity of the elect. Jesus' chilling saying, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (*multi sunt uocati, pauci uero electi*) runs like a mantra through the final sections of Homily 38, on Matthew's parable of the marriage feast.[47] It surfaces again in Homily 19, on the labourers in the vineyard:[48]

> Then there are two things we must consider carefully. Since there are *many who are called but few who are chosen*, the first thing is that no one should be presumptuous about himself. Even though he has already been called to the faith, he does not know whether he may be considered worthy of the eternal kingdom. Secondly, no one should presume to despair of a neighbour, even if he sees him steeped in vice. He does not know the riches of the divine mercy.

While Gregory does transmit biblical assertions that the names of the elect are written in heaven (Luke 10:20), and that the total number of the elect has already been determined by God,[49] he does not offer systematic discus-

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[44] *Mor.* 16.26.31–16.27.33 for the elect; for the wicked, punishment, and hell, esp. *Mor.* 9 and 15.

[45] *Mor.* 4.11.19.

[46] For Gregory on predestination, grace, and free will, see Carol Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 137–41, and 200, esp. 140, n. 77, with multiple citations from the *Mor.* and *HEz.*; also Dagens, *Saint Grégoire*, pp. 247–51.

[47] Matthew 22:2–14, saying at 22:14; *HEv.* 38.14–16 (CCSL 141:373–78, ll. 343, 360, 426, 487).

[48] Matt. 20:1–16; *HEv.* 19.6, trans. Hurst, p. 83 (CCSL 141:149, ll. 153–59): "Duo ergo sunt quae sollicite pensare debemus. Quia enim multi uocati, sed pauci electi sunt, primum est ut de se quisque minime praesumat, quia etsi iam ad fidem uocatus est, utrum perenni regno dignus sit nescit. Secundum uero est ut unusquisque proximum, quem fortasse iacere in uitiis conspicit, desperare non audeat, quia diuinae misericordiae diuitias ignorat."

[49] For example, *Mor.* 25.8.20.

sion of predestination, or detailed consideration of the extent to which the elect have already been chosen. Such apophaticism, one suspects, was pastorally astute. On a related matter, that the elect will be raised in both soul *and* body, Gregory displays no such reticence, vehemently defending the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The two-fold restoration to Job of his livestock, Gregory asserts at both the beginning and the end of *Moralia*, prefigures the two-fold restoration at the final, universal judgement to holy Church of all her elect members, in both soul and body.[50]

Antichrist

> For he will be cast down in the sight of all, because when the eternal Judge then terribly appears, when legions of Angels stand at his side, when the whole ministry of heavenly powers is attending, and all the elect are brought to behold this spectacle, this cruel and mighty monster is brought captive into the midst, and with his own body, that is, with all reprobates, is consigned to the eternal fires of hell.[51]

Gregory seizes on biblical prophecies of the coming Antichrist (Daniel 7, Revelation 13) with alacrity.[52] The Antichrist and his minions thread their way throughout the *Moralia* and the homilies like serpents hissing menace, finally emerging in full wickedness at the end of *Moralia*, where Gregory devotes three substantial books to their elusive identities, nefarious activities, and final, comprehensive defeat by God and his angels.[53] In this culmination to his exegesis of Job, Gregory does not shrink from the most difficult questions of theodicy, but tackles head on the problems of evil, the present-day suffering of the innocent and apparent flourishing of the

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[50] *Mor.* pref.10.20 (CCSL 143:23, ll. 8–22); 35.14.25 (CCSL 143B:1789). Gregory's views on the bodily resurrection in *Mor.* 14, 55.68–57.77 with mention of the patriarch Eutychios at §72–74 (CCSL 143A:740–46); for the dispute with Eutychios, see Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, pp. 213–14, and Matthew Dal Santo, this volume, pp. 7–8.

[51] *Mor.* 33.20.37, trans. LF 3:593 (CCSL 143B:1707, ll. 7–13): "Cunctis enim uidentibus praecipitabitur, quia aeterno tunc iudice terribiliter apparente, astantibus legionibus angelorum, assistente cuncto ministerio caelestium potestatum; atque electis omnibus ad hoc spectaculum deductis, ista belua crudelis et fortis in medium captiua deducitur; et cum suo corpore, id est cum reprobis omnibus, aeternis gehennae incendiis mancipatur."

[52] Dagens, *Saint Grégoire*, p. 353, for references and biblical foundations. Gregory's distillation in the *Moralia* of biblical teachings on Antichrist would have a long *Nachleben* in medieval western eschatology, with elements being paraphrased in sermons and saints' lives well into the 12th century; see Adriaan H. Bredero, "The Announcement of the Coming of the Antichrist and the Medieval Concept of Time," in *Prophecy and Eschatology*, ed. Michael Wilks, Studies in Church History 10 (Oxford, 1994), pp. 3–13.

[53] *Mor.* 32–34 (CCSL 143B:1625–1773).

wicked. He counsels his hearers that everything happens for a purpose, that God is fully in control, and that they should always look to the coming judgement, at which evil will finally be vanquished, and every sorrow banished, and God will be all in all. Thus, eschatology is the answer to theodicy.

Gregory leaves his hearers in no doubt that the forces of evil are real, and that Antichrist lies in wait to loose himself on the world, gather followers to himself, and inaugurate a reign of terror against the elect and the Church.[54] He will slay Enoch and Elijah, returned at the end of time.[55] He counts wicked temporal rulers among his earthly associates, men notable for their overweening arrogance, pride and self-promotion.[56] Through clandestine agents, both lay and clerical, he is active already in the Church.[57] Nor are patriarchs immune to his temptations. In a remarkable fulmination to Emperor Maurice, Gregory likens the behaviour of John of Constantinople, who had assumed the title "Ecumenical Patriarch," to that of a forerunner of Antichrist: "But I say confidently that, whoever calls himself a 'universal' priest, and desires to be called so, anticipates Antichrist in his pride."[58]

At times, Gregory speaks of Antichrist as a man, subject to judgement and eternal punishment like any mortal, into whom Satan will enter; he is the exalted prince of the wicked, who will draw many to himself, but whose power Christ at his coming will destroy, consigning him to eternal damnation.[59] Gregory also equates Antichrist with Satan or with monstrous biblical enemies of mankind such as Behemoth, Leviathan, the snake in the garden, and the dragon.[60] He is a monstrous beast who makes his den in men's hearts, and is constantly at work there, but only for a time.[61] He also represents the forces of wickedness that will be unleashed openly at the End, through his body, which is made up in its various parts of all the wicked, in the same manner that the body of Christ is made up of the Church and its righteous elect.[62]

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[54] Esp. *Mor.* 14.21.25–14.23.27; 32.

[55] *Mor.* 14.23.27.

[56] *Mor.* 25.16.34–35.

[57] *Mor.* 32.20.35–39.

[58] *Reg.* 7.30, trans. Martyn, 2:486–87; quotation at 487 (CCSL 140:491, ll. 34–36): "Ego autem fidenter dico quia, quisquis se uniuersalem sacerdotem uocat uel uocari desiderat, in elatione sua Antichristum praecurrit"; for context, see Dal Santo, this volume, p. 7.

[59] Among many possible references: *Mor.* 15.58.69, 15.61.72, 33.20.37, 34.13.24.

[60] *Mor.* 19.9.15; books 32–34, *passim*, esp. 33, 15.30 and 33.57–35.59.

[61] *Mor.* 27.26.49; 29.7.15–8.18.

[62] *Mor.* 32.16.28, 32.17.29, 33.20.37.

Whatever his ultimate bodily form, this ancient enemy will finally be let loose at the end of time, crawling out of the pit in which he has been imprisoned:[63]

> For now, as it is said by John, the dragon is imprisoned and held fast in the bottomless pit, because the wickedness of the devil is hidden from sight in their crafty hearts. But, as is there said, the dragon shall be brought forth out of the bottomless pit, because whatsoever is now covered over from fear, then against the Church openly out of the hearts of the wicked is all that serpent's venom brought to light.

Although Gregory at times does adopt dragon imagery for Satan, similar to that of Revelation 12–13, he adds his own twist to the story. He does not elaborate Revelation's vision of the great war in heaven, in which the archangel Michael defeats the dragon (Rev 12:7), but teaches instead that the elect see only the aftermath, once the monstrous adversary has already been defeated, bound, and led captive; they do not see the terrible final battle in which the beast is defeated.[64] The elect do participate in many minor battles and skirmishes before the End, however, in their personal struggles for virtue, and preachers also have a special role in the combat. Gregory expresses the highest regard for the power of preaching in combating evil and Antichrist: the words of preachers are teeth, swords, spears, bow and arrows, sling and stones, deployed in the service of God on the front lines against evil.[65]

The In-Gathering of the Nations

> So because both Judaea and the Gentile world are gathered to eternal rest as a portion of the elect, [Job] is rightly related to have possessed 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 she-asses.[66]

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[63] Rev 20:3; *Mor.* 19.9.15, trans. LF 2:406 (CCSL 140A:967, ll. 22–27): "Nunc enim sicut per ioannem dicitur, draco in abysso clausus tenetur, quia diabolica malitia in eorum subdolis cordibus occultatur. Sed sicut illic dictum est, educitur draco de puteo abyssi, quia quod modo prae timore tegitur, tunc contra ecclesiam publice de iniquorum cordibus omne serpentinum uirus aperitur."

[64] *Mor.* 33.20.37.

[65] Extended treatment in *Mor.* 34.8.17–34.13.24.

[66] *Mor.* 1.16.24, trans. LF, 1:45 (CCSL 143:38, ll. 68–70): "Quia ergo ad aeternam requiem pro electorum parte iudaea gentilitas que colligitur, recte quingenta iuga boum et quingentae asinae haberi perhibentur."

A more positive harbinger of the End than the revelation of Antichrist was the in-gathering of the nations, and especially the conversion of pagan nations to Christianity, a venture in which Gregory cooperated wholeheartedly. This would be crowned by the end-time conversion of the Jewish nation. Gregory introduces and concludes his massive exposition of Job in the *Moralia* with just this theme. The two-fold restoration of Job after his trials, with twice as many sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys as before (Job 1:3, 42:12), strikes Gregory as a type of the Church, in several senses. After her trials, holy Church will finally receive the Gentile nations in full, and will at the last add the converted Jewish nation—then, both will be like obedient flocks in submission to Christ.[67]

Gregory devoted himself with enthusiasm to the task of bringing into the harvest the remaining pagan nations:[68]

> By the brilliant miracles of preachers, he has brought even the ends of the world to the faith. For, lo! He has now penetrated the hearts of almost all nations; lo! He has joined together in one faith the boundaries of the East and of the West; lo! the tongue of Britain, which knew only how to grate barbarian sounds, has begun long since to resound in the divine praises the Hebrew Alleluia.

Gregory was of course intimately involved in the in-gathering of the Angles, having sent a party out from his own Roman monastery of St. Andrew, headed by its abbot, Augustine, whom he consecrated to become the first archbishop for the English nation.[69] The ever-increasing harvest of Gentiles was a sure sign that God's purpose for the redemption of the world, in part through the sufferings and self-sacrifice of his elect, was drawing ever closer to its fulfilment, and from this the faithful could derive consolation. After the fevered pitch of books 32–34, discussing evil and its defeat, the pace slows in the last book of the *Moralia*, the serenity and calm assurance of which come as welcome relief:[70]

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[67] *Mor.* pref.10.20, 1.16.23–4, 35.14.25.

[68] *Mor.* 27.11.21, trans. LF, 3:213–14 (CCSL 143B:1346, ll. 64–70): "... quia emicantibus praedicatorum miraculis, ad fidem etiam terminos mundi perduxit. Ecce enim paene cunctarum iam gentium corda penetrauit; ecce in una fide orientis limitem occidentis que coniunxit; ecce lingua britanniae, quae nihil aliud nouerat, quam barbarum frendere, iam dudum in diuinis laudibus hebraeum coepit alleluia resonare."

[69] See Marilyn Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons c.597–c.700: Discourses of Life, Death and Afterlife* (London, 2009), ch. 3; also Jeffrey Richards, *Consul of God: The Life and Times of Gregory the Great* (London, 1980), ch. 14; and Cristina Ricci, in this volume.

[70] *Mor.* 35.15.35, trans. LF, 3:686 (CCSL 143B:1797, ll. 1–9): "Haec historice facta credimus, haec mystice facienda speramus. Magis enim nouissimis iob quam principio benedicitur, quia quantum ad israelitici populi susceptionem pertinet, urgente fine praesentis saeculi,

> We believe that these things have taken place historically, we hope that they are to take place mystically. For the latter end of Job is blessed more than his beginning, because as far as concerns the admission of the people of Israel, when the end of the present world is pressing on, the Lord consoles the pain of Holy Church by a manifold in-gathering of souls. For then she will be the more abundantly enriched, the more clearly it becomes known that the temporal condition of the present life is hurrying to its close.

When?

When, finally, would the End come? While Gregory wrote constantly that the End was drawing near, ever orthodox and faithful to Scripture, he refused to be drawn on exactly *how* near it was, or when exactly it would come. He faithfully transmitted prophetic warnings regarding the imminence of the End, but did not counsel taking them literally.[71] As a sinner, he hoped for God's patience, and sufficient time for amendment of life. While striving to instil a sense of urgency in his correspondents, he nevertheless seems to have felt that the world was currently experiencing only initial warning signs, and that the Lord would tarry a bit longer. In June 601, he assured King Æthelbert of Kent that, "not all of these are going to come in our days, but they will all follow after our time."[72] His letter to Eusebia *patricia* spells out the urgency of preparing for "the terrifying trial of the Judge soon to come", but then closes with the wish that God would allow Eusebia to "live here in tranquillity with your most noble husband" and "allow you to come to eternal rewards after a long life."[73]

What would happen once the End did come? Gregory's apocalyptic interests seem to end with the End itself: he was not much interested in speculating on what might happen once Christ had come, either before or after the set piece of the Last Judgement. Ever allegorically-minded, he resists literal interpretations of biblical numbers and time spans, interpreting references to "1000 years" as representing the totality or perfection of

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dolorem sanctae ecclesiae dominus animarum multiplici collectione consolatur. Tanto quippe locupletius ditabitur, quanto et manifestius innotescit quod ad finem praesentis uitae temporalitas urgetur."

[71] A typical example is Gregory's quotation, without elaboration, of Zephaniah (1:14–16) towards the end of the homily for Advent I: *HEv.* 1.6 (CCSL 141: 10, ll. 139–44).

[72] *Reg.* 11.37, trans. Martyn, 3:784 (CCSL 140A:931, ll. 50–51): "Quae tamen non omnia nostris diebus uentura sunt, sed post nostros dies omnia subsequentur."

[73] *Reg.* 13.33, trans. Martyn, 3:849 (CCSL 140A:1035, ll. 9–10): "venturi iudicis examen tremendum"; 13–17: "Omnipotens autem deus haec uestris cogitationibus aspiratione sui spiritus infundat uos que et hic cum nobilissimo coniuge tranquille uiuere et de domni strategii salute gaudere faciat atque post longa tempora ad aeterna praemia peruenire concedat."

a period, rather than a precise number of years to count.[74] The millennial reign of Christ over a renewed cosmos—the "new heaven and the new earth" of Revelation 20—does not seem to feature in Gregory's thought at all. This is not surprising, given the condemnation (most notably, by Augustine of Hippo) of millenarianism.[75] Gregory's primary concern was not speculation on events that lay far ahead in the future, and were largely beyond our control, but salvation of the souls gathered in front of him here and now. Gregory strained with his utmost art and persuasive power for the conversion of his flock, to turn them from love of this world, decaying and hastening towards its end, to love of the true and lasting homeland, the *patria caelestis*. That was all he as *pastor* could finally do for his sheep; the rest was in the hands of God.

[74] E.g., *Mor.* 9.3.3, 18.42.67, 32.15.22.
[75] For Augustine, see Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, pp. 133–34.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GREGORY'S MORAL THEOLOGY: DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Carole Straw

Gregory ends his sermons on Ezekiel abruptly in 593, overwhelmed by events. Tribulations increase daily; swords surround them; death seems imminent. Like Job, he is "weary of life" (10:1), and asks:[1]

> What therefore remains except to give thanks with tears amidst the lashes we suffer for our sins? But he who created us also became the father to us through the spirit of adoption which he gave. Sometimes he nourishes his sons with bread and other times corrects them with the whip; through sorrows and wounds, and gifts, he trains them for their eternal inheritance.

At that moment, the Lombards were besieging Rome, just the latest misfortune in the decades of hardship that had convinced Gregory the End had begun.[2] An apocalyptic urgency intensified his sense of life as a war between good and evil, a relentless trial of one's strength and resourcefulness. Christians are combatants: soldiers and athletes.[3] Trained with whips (*flagella*), they are challenged to maintain equanimity (*equanimitas*) amidst this terrible combination of sorrows, wounds and gifts.

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[1] *HEz.* 2.10.24 (CCSL 142:397): "Quid igitur restat, nisi ut inter flagella quae ex nostris iniquitatibus patimur cum lacrimis gratias agamus? Ipse etenim qui nos creauit etiam pater nobis factus est per adoptionis spiritum quem dedit. Et aliquando filios pane nutrit, aliquando flagello corrigit, quia per dolores et uulnera et munera ad hereditatem perpetuam erudit"; *Ep. ad Lean.*5 (CCSL 143:6): "Omnis filius, qui a Deo recipitur, flagellatur". Cf. Heb. 12:6.

[2] Cf. *Reg.* 3.29 (CCSL 140:175); *Reg.* 3.61 (CCSL 140:209–11); *Reg.* 11.37 (CCSL 140A:931–32). For Gregory's apocalypticism, see Claude Dagens, "La Fin des temps et l'église selon saint Grégoire le grand," *Recherches de science religieuse* 58 (1970), 273–88; René Wasselynck, "L'Orientation eschatologique de la vie chrétienne d'après saint Grégoire le grand", *Assemblées du Seigneur* 2 (1962), 66–80.

[3] E.g. *Mor.* 1.3.4 (CCSL 143:27); *Mor.* 3.21.39–41 (CCSL 143:141–42); *Mor.* 10.1.1 (CCSL 143:534); *Mor.* 8.2.2 (CCSL 143:383); *Mor.* 18.26.43 (CCSL 143A:913); *Mor.* 8.6.8–9 (CCSL 143:386–388); *Reg.* 3.51 (CCSL 140:196); *Mor.* 12.7.10 (CCSL 143A:634); *HEz.* 2.7.20 (CCSL 142:333); *RP* 3.10 (SC 282:308). For the *agon* in Gregory, see Carole Straw, "The Classical Heritage and a New Spiritual Synthesis," *Gregorio Magno: nel XIV centenario della morte*, Atti dei Convegni Lincei 209 (Rome, 2004), pp. 107–31.

This agonistic rigour links Gregory with the ascetic tradition of the desert fathers, Ambrose, Jerome, and Cassian, a tradition of education (*paideia*) conveying the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics on self-mastery (*enkrateia*) and temperance (*sophrosyne*).[4] Like the Stoic sage, his models of virtue are athletes and wrestlers in training for contests and soldiers fighting in battles. Disciplined to have courage, strength, and endure suffering, they have stability, weathering changes of fortune with equanimity.[5] Using *discretio*,[6] they monitor their thoughts continuously in the "citadel of the mind" (*arx mentis*), moderating their behaviour to mark the virtuous mean between extremes. Gregory adapts the Stoic technology of the self (and its supporting science and philosophy) to advance Christian values, particularly of patience, self-sacrifice, and compassion.[7] Stoicism provides a comprehensive unity, a philosophical "skeleton" for a "body" of moral theology.

Stoicism is nothing new to Christianity. Paul's letters reflect Stoic teachings, logic, rhetoric, and love of paradox:[8] ways of thinking that helped him formulate the relationship of Old and New Dispensations, still a constant in Christian thought. Paul separates Christianity from the Judaism that validates it by explaining how Old and New are opposed as outward, carnal law and inward, spiritual grace, yet continuous. Grace is the fulfillment of the law, and the old external letter and law is essential as the very means of reaching the internal spirit and grace.[9] Gregory goes beyond

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[4] Pierre Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris, 1981), esp. 25–74; Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Oxford, 1961); idem, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. Gilbert Highet, 3 vols (New York, 1939–44).

[5] For the Stoic sage, see esp. Ludwig Edelstein, *The Meaning of Stoicism* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), pp. 1–25. Gregory adapts the Stoic virtues of *fortitudo, patientia, stabilitas, constantia, continentia, prudentia, iustitia* and *temperantia.*

[6] André Cabassut defines *discretio* as the ability to discern virtue (the mean between extremes) along with other spiritual truths, as well as the ability to control or moderate behavior to conform to the ideal, in "Discretion," *Dictionnaire de la Spiritualité*, 9:1311–30. Exact translation depends on context, see section below, "*Discretio* and Self-husbandry".

[7] Gregory marks a watershed in the development of the idea of compassion; see Carole Straw, "Gregory and the Tradition of Compassion," *Gregorio Magno e le origini dell'Europa*, SISMEL (forthcoming).

[8] Cf. Quint. *inst.* 9.3.81–6; Cic. *Parad* (entire); see Claude Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand: Culture et experience chrétiennes* (Paris, 1977), pp. 124–34.

[9] The Old and New Dispensations are ethically opposed, as external, carnal law and internal, spiritual grace. Yet they are continuous: the New is the fulfillment of the Old, grace is the fulfillment of the Law. In time, Old precedes New; in order, Old is subordinate to New. In aspect, the Old is exterior to the interior of the New. In function, Old is the means to the end of the New: through the external letter one reaches the inner meaning. See Gerard Caspary's full exposition in *Politics and Exegesis: Origen and the Two Swords* (Berkeley, 1979).

Paul's dialectic of flesh and spirit to stress the reciprocity and complementarity of the carnal and spiritual sides of experience, whether in active and contemplative lives, adversity and prosperity, virtue and sin, or even God and the devil. The ultimate unity of the divine dispensation transcends (although it does not negate) divisions of good and evil to create a harmonious vase-painting in which the black highlights the red or white.[10]

An expert witness to God's plan,[11] Gregory presents his rhetorical explanations of God's order as probative, and his own spiritual directions derive seamlessly from his analysis of it. Surely, if order can be demonstrated logically, it must exist objectively! Gregory explains the intrinsic, often ironic logic of the various antitheses, paradoxes, complementarities ordering the universe taking it as proof that God has ordered the universe "fittingly", "justly", or "fairly" (*iuste, recte, aeque*). God's "marvellous dispensation" (*mira dispensatio*) is "nature" or "necesssity" itself (*necessitas*)—the way things are and must be.[12] Such brilliant patterns of order can only be God's work, which must mean he cares for humanity. Gregory shares the Stoic conviction that Providence allows nothing disordered or random in the universe; everything is rational and purposeful.[13] God has a plan, predestined from eternity, and it must be for the good. Most importantly, God has not abandoned the world to the devil, as some fear.[14] Gregory's *Pastoral Care* provides reassurances of God's providence, but at the same time he warns of God's unpredictable severity (as we shall see).

The Mediated Universe

Encouraging evidence of Providence is everywhere, even on the gentlest breeze. Natural, political, and personal events carry God's messages.

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[10] Cf. *Mor.* 33.14.29 (CCSL 143B:1698–99). A Stoic idea, see John Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 37–54.

[11] Gregory felt divinely inspired; see *Ep. ad Leand.* 2 (CCSL 143:3).

[12] That justice is what is fitting, appropriate, right, and proper according to nature and God's order, that everything has a proper place and role in the larger entity, goes back to Plato and Aristotle, subsequently adopted by Stoics; see Plato, *Rep.* 4.427C–445D. One's place in the hierarchy was deemed just—a reflection of one's true merit—because it was validated by the honour and privileges each person enjoyed or lacked, a status bequeathed to heirs. In other words, "nature" was defined by society, reinforcing the existing aristocracy of honour and wealth. Gregory's various descriptors—*iuste, recte*, etc.—flag the working of Providence.

[13] See Michel Spanneut, *Le Stoïcisme des Pères de l'Église de Clément de Rome à Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1969), p. 401.

[14] Cf. *Mor.* 27.17.34 (CCSL 143B:1356).

Prosperity (*prosperitas*) is the good fortune of his smile, grace, blessings, and rewards: wealth, honour, health, family—all the sources of happiness.[15] Spiritually, success in contemplation, continence—virtue in general—is prosperity.[16] Ironically, the Church's prosperity is worldly and carnal: wealth, power, and involvement in secular affairs; a historical change from the adversity of persecution by secular authorities. Now, unhappily, adversity is the internal persecution of heretics and hypocrites.[17] Adversity (*aduersitas*) is misfortune in general. The loss of God's gifts, his whippings or beatings (*flagella*), are his wrath, discipline, chastisement, punishment, and affliction manifested variously in the tribulations affecting the larger world (e.g., earthquakes, war, famine, etc.) as well as personal losses (death, poverty, illness, shame, etc.).[18] Spiritually, adversity is abandonment by God, evinced in sin and temptation.[19] What one experiences in life is not at all random. God uses adversity and prosperity as *paideia* to teach and train humanity. His involvement in daily life is intimate and inescapable. Nothing is neutral or indifferent: everything has meaning. God is everywhere at all times.[20]

This feeling of being in God's presence, or of experiencing a supernatural reality, is particularly evoked by places, people, or actions that link this world and the next. This is the "mixed" reality of medieval texts, where visible and invisible, natural and supernatural, human and divine, carnal and spiritual exist side-by-side and are interwoven so closely that one can easily be deceived by a demon disguised as a stranger, or awed to discover that a leper is Christ in disguise.[21] The two worlds are joined materially, being literally continuous. Hell is beneath the earth, visible in fiery volcanoes that warn of future punishments, while the afterlife of rewards is in

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[15] E.g. *Mor.* 20.3.8 (CCSL 143A:1007–8); *Mor.* 30.10.38 (CCSL 143B:1519–20); *Mor.* 9.13.20 (CCSL 143:470–71); *Mor.* 5.2.2 (CCSL 143:219–20); *Mor.* 10.10.16–19 (CCSL 143:549–51); *HEz.* 2.7.20 (CCSL 142:332–34); *Mor.* 8.54.91–92 (CCSL 143:453–55).

[16] E.g.. *Mor.* 23.25–27.51–54 (CCSL 143B:1184–87); *Mor.* 10.10.16–19 (CCSL 143:549–51); *Mor.* 2.52.83 (CCSL 143:109–10); *Mor.* 2.49.78–79 (CCSL 143:106–8).

[17] E.g. *Mor.* 20.33.65 (CCSL 143A:1051); *Mor.* 14.6.7 (CCSL 143A:701); *Mor.* 15.5.6 (CCSL 143A:752); *Mor.* 26.40.73 (CCSL 143B:1320–21); *Mor.* 26.41.76 (CCSL 143B:1322–23).

[18] E.g. *Mor.* 20.19–22.45–49 (CCSL 143A:103–39); *Mor.* 20.3.8 (CCSL 143A:1007–8); *Mor.* 7.25–26.31–32 (CCSL 143:355–56); *Mor.* 2.13–14.22–23 (CCSL 143:73–74); *Mor.* 26.46–47.84–85 (CCSL 143B:1328–29).

[19] E.g. *Mor.* 9.13.20 (CCSL 143:470–71); *Mor.* 20.3.8 (CCSL 143A:1007–8); *Mor.* 23.26.52ff. (CCSL 143B:1185ff.); *Mor.* 10.10.16–19 (CCSL 143:549–51); *Mor.* 6.22.39 (CCSL 143:312–13); *Mor.* 2.49.78–79 (CCSL 143:106–8).

[20] See Michael Frickel, *Deus totus ubique simul* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1956).

[21] *Dial.* 1.10.7 (SC 260:98); *HEv.* 2.39.10 (CCSL 141:391).

the sky: transcendent heaven is literally in the physical heavens.[22] Natural causes yield to supernatural explanations. Demons make rocks immovable, not their massive weight; and should a wall collapse, or a kitchen catch fire, blame the demon's malice, not the worker's negligence.[23]

Active mediators join this world and the next. The saint is inhabited by God as an earthly temple; his speech carries God's authority, and his miracles reveal his participation in God's power.[24] In daily life, holy men can be called upon to reach across worlds and return the dead to life. The martyrs' bones work miracles on earth, proving that they truly live after death.[25] Holiness is so tangible it rubs off on successive contacts with relics. A cloth (*brandeum*) folded in a box and placed near the body of a saint absorbs so much holiness that it bleeds when cut.[26] The power to work miracles can even be transferred from a holy man to an ordinary monk.[27] Ordinary boundaries dissolve. Salvation can be accomplished even after death by Masses offered on behalf of the departed, the good works of proxies pays the debts of others to clear their path to heaven.[28]

The Eucharist becomes central. Mediating with God through the sacrifice of the Mass, the Eucharist replicates and continues Christ's sacrifice on behalf of humanity.[29] In *Dialogues* 4.60.3, Gregory describes the mediation transpiring at the sacrifice of the Eucharist (the *hostia* or "victim"):[30]

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[22] *Dial.* 4.44.1–3 (SC 265:156–58) and *Dial.* 4.36.12 (SC 265:122).

[23] Rocks, *Dial.* 1.7.2 (SC 260:66–68); the wall, *Dial.* 2.111–13 (SC 260:172–74); the fire *Dial.* 2.10.1–2 (SC 260:170–72); see also Sofia Boesch Gajano, "Demoni et miracoli nei Dialogi di Gregorio Magno," in *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés des iv–xii siécles* (Paris, 1981), pp. 263–81, at p. 267; Pierre Boglioni, "Miracle et nature chez Grégoire le grand," in *Cahiers d'études médiévales, I: Epopées, légendes et miracles* (Montreal and Paris, 1974), pp. 28–35.

[24] Cf. *Dial.* 1.9.9 (SC 260:84).

[25] *Dial.* 4.6.1–2 (SC 265:38–40).

[26] *Reg.* 4.30 (CCSL 140:249). On relics, see John M. McCulloh, "The Cult of Relics in the Letters and 'Dialogues' of Pope Gregory the Great: A Lexicographical Study," *Traditio* 32 (1976), 145–84.

[27] *Dial.* 2.7.1–4 (SC 260:156–160).

[28] *Dial.* 4.57.1–17 (SC 265:184–94).

[29] *Dial.* 4.60.3 (SC 265: 202); *HEv.* 2.37.9 (CCSL 141:355); *Mor.* 13.18.26 (CCSL 143A:683); cf. Ruf. *Orig. in lev.* 9.2. See Henry Ashworth, "The Liturgical Prayers of St. Gregory the Great," *Traditio* 15 (1959), 107–62, at 119; Johannes Betz, "Eucharistie als zentrales Mysterium" in *Mysterium Salutis: Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik*, eds Johannes Feiner and Magnus Lohrer (Einsiedeln, 1973), vol. 4, pt. 2, pp. 185–313, at pp. 229–30; Philipp Oppenheim, "Eucharistischer Kult und Messopfer. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Wandels der eucharistischen Frömmigkeit," in *Miscellanea Pio Paschini*, Studi di Storia Ecclesiastica (Rome, 1948), 1:237–68.

[30] *Dial.* 4.60.3 (SC 265:202): "Quis enim fidelium habere dubium possit ipsa immolationis hora ad sacerdotis uocem caelos aperiri, in illo Iesu Christi mysterio angelorum choros adesse, summis ima sociari, terram caelestibus iungi, unum quid ex uisibilibus atque inuisibilibus fieri?"

> ... for who of the faithful can have any doubt that at the moment of the immolation, at the sound of the priest's voice, the heavens stand open and choirs of angels are present at the ministry of Jesus Christ? There at the altar the lowest is joined to the highest, earth is joined to heaven, the visible and invisible somehow merge into one.

Miraculously, the sacrifice joins two realities: the present, carnal and mortal world of humanity and the transcendent, spiritual, immortal world of the divine. By Gregory's time, the Eucharist is no longer principally the thanksgiving of the Apostolic Church, but assumes new importance as the sacrifice of the 'victim'.[31] Acting as the earthly image of Christ, the priest dispenses the sacrament that mystically unites the members with Christ. By participating in the sacrifice of the head of their Church on earth, they will join him in heaven.

Gregory gives the Eucharist a new centrality that shapes the future; he is a forerunner of the Eucharistic piety of later medieval and Counter Reformation Christianity. He speaks of the daily Mass[32] and of confession to pastors,[33] uncommon at the time. A propagandist of Masses for the dead, he presents the Eucharist as the agent of a wide range of miracles, outside the miracle of the Mass.[34] Gregory also places the Mass at the centre of individual moral discipline, as we shall see.

The Providential Order of Creation

Proof of Providence lies in the harmony, the brilliant order, of all things. Following other Christians, Gregory adopts the Stoic teachings about world order, nature, science, and medicine, even legal and political philosophy to illuminate this order.[35] Our place is optimal, midway (*in medio*) in

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[31] For these changes, see esp. Betz, "Eucharistie als zentrales Mysterium," pp. 229ff.

[32] *Dial.* 4.60.2–3 (SC 265:200–02). See Cyril Vogel, "Deux conséquences de l'escatologie grégorienne: la multiplication des messes privées et les moines-prêtres," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 267–76, at 270–71.

[33] See Hermann Josef Vogt, "Liturgy," in *The Imperial Church from Constantine to the Early Middle Ages*, eds Karl Baus et al., trans. Anselm Biggs, *History of the Church*, ed. Herbert Jedin (New York, 1969), 2:678–84, at pp. 678, 681–84.

[34] *Dial.* 3.3.1–2 (SC 260:268–70); *Dial.* 4.59.1–4.60.1 (SC 265:196–200); *HEv.* 2.37.8–9 (CCSL 141:354–56); *Dial.* 1.8.5 (SC 260:74); *Dial.* 2.24.1–2 (SC 260:210–12).

[35] See esp. Samuel Sambursky, *The Physical World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1962); Wesley D. Smith, *The Hippocratic Tradition* (Ithaca and London, 1979), pp. 108ff.; F.H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (New York, 1975), pp. 71–78; Jackie Pigeaud, *La Maladie de l'âme: étude sur la relation de l'âme et du corps dans la tradition medico-philosophique antique* (Paris, 1981). Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.24.56; 4.10.23.

creation. Above beasts and below angels, we share something with both, having a sensible body and a rational mind.[36] Moreover, we have "a great communion" (*magna communio uniuersitatis*) with *all* of creation. Like stones, we exist; like trees, we live; like beasts, we feel; and like angels, we understand, and share an immortal spirit.[37] Humanity spans the great divide between the spiritual and rational existence of immutable, eternal heaven and the material and sensible existence of the mutable, temporal earth; God created us as a microcosm, gathering "together another world in miniature", uniting visible and invisible, soul and body, spirit and clay.[38] In fact, we *are* a "universe" (*uniuersitas*) given our likeness to it.[39]

The sensible body and rational soul are both sympathetic and antagonistic, so their unity is paradoxical—a marvel proving God's hand in the design, for it is by his power that "spirit and clay are mixed in such great harmony that when the flesh is weakened, the spirit droops, and when the spirit is afflicted the flesh wastes away".[40] Materially, humours connect body and soul through excesses (*superflua*). The inward swelling (*tumor*) of pride descends to the genitals as lust, its outward analogue. Gluttony fuels not only lust, but excessive talking, and *leuitas operis*, "a lack of seriousness for work".[41] Gregory knew the unity of mind and body from personal experience. Calling the body the "instrument of the heart" (*organum*

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[36] *Dial.* 4.3.2 (SC 265:24); cf. Ambr. *hex.* 9.7.42 and 6.7.43; Ambr. *instit. virg.* 20; Ambr. *exc. Sat.* 2.130; Ambr. *Noe* 86 and 99; Ambr. *in Psalm. 118* serm.10.13–15; Ambr. *in psalm.* 43.

[37] *Mor.* 6.16.20 (CCSL 143:298); *Mor.* 6.15.18 (CCSL 143:296); *HEz.* 1.8.16 (CCSL 142:109); Cf. Ambr. *hex.* 6.9.55. See Spanneut, *Le Stoïcisme*, pp. 410ff.; and Marie-Therese d'Alverny, "L'Homme comme symbole. Le microcosme," in *Simbol e Simbologia nell' alto medioevo.* Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo 23 (Spoleto, 1976), pp. 123–145.

[38] *Mor.* 6.15.18 (CCSL 143:296): "in breui colligens mundum alterum"; see also *HEz.* 1.8.16 (CCSL 142:109); cf. Ambr, *hex.* 6.55; Arist. *HA* 8.1.5886.

[39] *Mor.* 6.16.29 (CCSL 143:298). Stoic ideas of sympathy and concord are materialistic, being predicated on the continuity of matter in the universe; the soul and even the *logos* are highly-refined matter. With Platonists, Christians see the duality and opposition of matter and spirit, visible and invisible, body and soul, etc., so their unity is highly paradoxical. See Jacques Brunschwig, "Stoic Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brian Inwood (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 206–32, at pp. 210–11.

[40] *HEz.* 2.8.9 (CCSL 142:343): "Certe ex spiritu es creatus et limo, uno inuisibili, altero uisibili, uno sensibili, altero insensibili. Quomodo ergo permisceri in te potuit spiritus et limus atque ex diuerso fieri res non diuersa, ita ut in tanta conuenientia misceretur spiritus et limus, ut cum caro atteritur spiritus marceat, et cum spiritus affligitur caro contabescat?"

[41] See *Mor.* 26.17.28 (CCSL 143B:1286); *Mor.* 26.17.28 (CCSL 143B:1286); *Mor.* 7.28.35 (CCSL 143:359); *HEz.* 1.12.27–28 (CCSL 142:199).

cordis), he complains to Leander of Seville that when the flesh is too weak to sustain speech, the mind cannot convey its meaning.[42]

Yet body is the enemy of the inner person, variously called the "soul" (*anima*), "rational soul" (*animus*), "mind" (*mens*), "spirit" (*spiritus*), or "heart" (*cor*). Our link to God in contemplation, it discerns spiritual truths and moral ideals, and is the source of virtue.[43] Our likeness (*similitudo*) and image (*imago*) of God,[44] it is our true identity, while the body is mere clay (*lutum*). Possessing humours, the body shares the qualities of the four elements—fire, air, water, and earth—that make up the universe (heat, cold, moisture, and dryness), and is affected by changes that nourish or diminish various humours, such as climate, weather, diet, seasons, and even individual habits.[45] These humours determine temperaments and proclivities to specific vices, as is evident in the contrasting categories of believers in *Pastoral Rule*, Book III.[46] Since we share the senses and instincts of animals as well as their mortality, our minds suffer dangerous needs that can exceed to pleasure (food, rest, shelter, etc.), and our senses bombard us constantly with temptations of sight, sound, taste, and touch.[47] The soul's antithesis, the body, is sensible, material, temporal, and mortal.

Gregory applies Paul's war of flesh against spirit (Gal 5:17) to body and soul, "for as the flesh is nourished by softness, the spirit is nourished by hardness. Mildness pampers the one, harshness exercises the other. One is fed by delights, the other flourishes on bitterness".[48] Each undermines the other. When the flesh is rapt in pleasure, the spirit fails; and when the

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[42] *Ep. ad Leand.* 5 (CCSL 143:6–7).

[43] *Mor.* 5.34.63 (CCSL 143:262); *Mor.* 11.50.68 (CCSL 143A:624–25); *Mor.* 12.15.19 (CCSL 143A:640); *Mor.* 25.3.4 (CCSL 143B:1232); *Mor.* 14.15.17 (CCSL 143A:707–8).

[44] *Mor.* 32.12.17 (CCSL 143B:1641–42); *Mor.* 5.34.63 (CCSL 143:262); *Mor.* 29.10.21 (CCSL 143B:1448), *Mor.* 9.49.75 (CCSL 143:509); cf. Aug., *trin.* 11.5.8; Aug. *quaest. Simpl.* 51.2; Aug. *De civ. Dei* 12.23; Ambr. *hex.* 9.7A3.

[45] For the four elements, see *Mor.* 35.16.42 (CCSL 143B:1802); cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.17. On temperaments and various vices, see *Mor.* 14.13.15 (CCSL 143A:706–7); *Mor.* 3.22.45 (CCSL 143:143), *Mor.* 9.58.88 (CCSL 143:519). See esp. *RP* 3, which addresses how to advise the faithful according to differences in temperament, social status, habits, marital status, etc. For the general theory of humours, see W. Balzer and A. Eleftheriadis, "A Reconstruction of the Hippocratic Humoral Theory of Health," *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 22 (1991), 207–227. Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.24.56; 4.10.23.

[46] See also *Mor.* 29.22.45 (CCSL 143B:1464–65).

[47] Cf. Aug. *De civ. Dei* 12.21; Ruf. *Greg. Naz. orat.* 38.11.

[48] *Mor.* 10.24.42 (CCSL 143:567): "spiritus deficit, ubi caro requiescit.Vt enim caro mollibus, sic anima duris nutritur: illam blanda refouent, hanc aspera exercent; illa delectationibus pascitur, haec amaritudinibus uegetatur. Et sicut carnem dura sauciant, sic spiritum mollia necant; sicut illam laboriosa interimunt, ita hunc delectabilia exstinguunt".

spirit soars heavenward, the flesh is enfeebled, overwhelmed by the task.[49] In equating "the flesh" with the body, and "the spirit" with the inner, rational side of humanity, Gregory conflates the Stoic cosmology of body and soul with Paul's (and Augustine's) complex notion of carnality and spirituality. Significantly, Gregory ignores Augustine's insistence on the neutrality of the body and culpability of the will for sin. Instead, his anthropology recalls the dualism of classical, as well as Christian, ascetic traditions:[50]

> For the flesh drags us to the depths, lest the spirit puff us up, and the spirit draws us to the heights, lest the flesh fall down. For if the spirit did not raise us, we would be in the depths, and if the flesh did not weigh us down, we would exalt ourselves because of the heights.

Marvellously (providentially), enemies become friends! The body and soul no longer simply oppose, but complement each other. Outwardly, the body pulls the soul earthward to sin, unless inwardly, the soul rises heavenward in contemplation; while inwardly, the soul would exalt itself in pride, were not outwardly, the body to humble the soul with temptation.[51] But "by a certain control" (*certo moderamine*), the saints unite them so that each checks the sinful extreme of its opponent. The result is humility and hope, a balance-point—a mean between extremes—the Stoic ideal of moderation and virtue.

Adversity and prosperity share an analogous complementarity. By remembering adversity in prosperity, one stays humble; and by recalling prosperity in adversity, one recovers hope.[52] The soul has a dynamic equilibrium, avoiding twin extremes of "pride" (*superbia*) and "dispossession" or "depression" (*deiectio*), as well as "overconfidence" (*securitas*) and "despair" (*desperatio*).[53] In fact, a whole range of spiritual and carnal pairs are complementary: Church and state,[54] mercy and justice, mildness and severity, humility and pride, love and fear, contemplation and penitence,

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[49] See *Mor.* 4.27.49 (CCSL 143:193) and *Dial.* 3.24.3 (SC 260:362–64); cf. *Vitae patr.* 5.10.17.

[50] *Mor.* 19.6.12 (CCSL 143A:964); "Ad ima quippe trahit caro ne extollat spiritus; et ad summa trahit spiritus ne prosternat caro. Spiritus leuat ne iaceamus in infimis; caro aggrauat ne extollamur ex summis. Rursum uero si non temptante carne ad summa nos spiritus subleuaret, in superbiae casu ipsa nos peius subleuatione prosterneret". Cf. Cass. *conl.* 4.12.

[51] Ibid.

[52] See esp. *HEz.* 2.7.15–20 (CCSL 142:329–34) and n. 134.

[53] *Mor.* 3.9.16 (CCSL 143:125); *Mor.* 5.36.71 (CCSL 143:271); *Mor.* 33.12.24 (CCSL 143B:1694); *Mor.* 7.32.48–49 (CCSL 143:370–71); *Mor.* 26.17.30 (CCSL 143B:1287).

[54] See Carole Straw, "Gregory's Politics: Theory and Practice," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, pp. 47–63.

grace and law, love of one's neighbour and love of God, Christ, as redeemer and teacher, man and God, advocate and judge. Complementarity is the fundamental principle of providential order, the "shape" of harmony.

The Order of Heavenly Government and Concord

The complementarity of opposing pairs begins with hierarchical subordination. Antagonism fades—a fight or war is averted—when one party submits to the authority of the other. This order is natural and self-evident (or so it seems); by definition, high is above low. As "soul and flesh", we are "composed of strength and weakness";[55] obviously, irrational flesh should obey rational soul. This "order of heavenly government" (*superni moderaminis dispositio*)[56] preserves peace. Each has a proper place, which is "justice" as the ancient philosophers defined it.[57] A distributive justice defines the privileges and obligations of each member, while a retributive justice avenges overstepping one's proper place, or conversely, falling short. All things corporate are subject to this just order, and can enjoy its concord, the body, the family, the state, the universe itself.

The Church manifests these classical ideals perfectly as a *compago*, "a joining together, or unity" "of Christ's body" or "of his members", a *compago* "of love", "hearts", or "concord"; the strong are the "bones" and the weak are the "skin".[58] The interconnections of this body are mystical, as found in Paul, 1 Cor 12:26, "And if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it", and Rom 8:17, "And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him".[59] Members have roles appropriate to their natures. The

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[55] *Mor.* 14.15.17 (CCSL 143A:707–8): "Omnis itaque homo, quia ex anima et carne constat, quasi ex robore et infirmitate compositus est".

[56] *Mor.* 9.5.5 (CCSL 143:458).

[57] See n. 12 above.

[58] E.g. *corpus Christi, Reg.* 2.40 (CCSL 140:127); *membrorum, Mor* 19.25.42–43 (CCSL 143A:990–91); *caritatis, Reg.* 2.44 (CCSL 140:134); *RP* 2.5 (SC 381:198); *cordium, Mor.* 33.8.15 (CCSL 143B:1686); *concordiae, Reg.* 13.41 (CCSL 140A:1045); *ossa, cutis, corporis, Mor.* 20.40.77 (CCSL143A:1060). The *locus classicus* of concord is Arist. *Pol.* 1.1252^{a}1–1255^{b}1.

[59] I Cor 12:26: "et si quid patitur unum membrum conpatiuntur omnia membra siue gloriatur unum membrum congaudent omnia membra"; Rom. 8:17: "si autem filii et heredes heredes quidem Dei coheredes autem Christi si tamen conpatimur ut et conglorificemur". See esp. *Ep.* 3.9 (MGH Epp. 2, eds Paul Ewald and Ludwig M. Hartmann [Hannover, 1899], Appendix III, p. 450) analysed in Carole Straw, "Much Ado About Nothing: Gregory the Great's Apology to the Istrians," in *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters*

spiritual members, the "eyes" (*oculi*), direct the Church, while the carnal members, the "feet" (*pedes*) serve the Church in the "dust" (*puluis*) of the world. Diversity is essential; members would not be a body if they all did the same thing. Lacking sight, the "feet" should not try to see, nor should the "eyes" try to work, because they would be blinded by the world's dust.[60] The lesson is not only to accept class differences, but rather that no one is self-sufficient. Only part of a whole, each needs the other. Sharing what they have and receiving what they lack, they are united through love and acts of compassion, just as God ordained.

Universally, concord depends on hierarchy. Subjects must submit to authorities, who rule by God's ordinance and on his behalf, and obey authorities as they do God, instantly and implicitly, like St. Benedict's monks in Gregory's *Dialogues*. What matters is the Church's purview. Gregory legitimates the "carnal" power of the Church and its vicars, and their activities in the world. Rulers can earn a special reward if they submit to God and rule for the benefit of their subjects.[61] Always imagining themselves before the divine judge, rulers can remain inwardly humble while outwardly in power. Gregory's affirmation of worldly involvement is, of course, balanced by his emphasis on the contemplative life, but it is a positive adaptation to the needs of Christians in an era of declining secular institutions.

The Fall and the Nature of Sin

Violations of this heavenly government of hierarchy explain our present fallen state. Gregory follows, but modifies Augustine (*De civ. Dei* 12–14). Without obedience to authority, Paradise is lost and suffering begins. Both the devil and Adam are driven by a *libido dominandi*, a "desire to be in control." Seeking autonomy, they rebel against God's authority, throwing off the heavenly government necessary for order and harmony.[62] Like the devil, Adam believed he could find satisfaction in himself, so he sought to be his own law to gratify his selfish desires.[63] But the Creator's role

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and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean, eds Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubitt (Turnholt, 2007), pp. 121–60.

[60] *Mor.* 28.10.24 (CCSL 143B:1414).

[61] *Mor.* 26.26.44 (CCSL 143B:1299); *RP* 2.6 (SC 381:204).

[62] *Mor.* 9.5.5 (CCSL 143:458); cf. *Mor.* 29.7.15 (CCSL 143B:1444).

[63] Gregory links pride, self-love and pleasure. Adam rejects God in order to pursue the selfish pleasures of the body; the desire for pleasure and a craving for autonomy

is to rule; the creature's is to obey. This pride or insolence is the same transgression the ancient Greeks call *hubris*, or the high treason implicit in the French *lèse majesté*. God avenges this outrage with retributive justice, "justly" and "rightly" punishing Adam's rebellion with that of his own servant, the body.[64] Now roles reverse; servant rules master in a perverse tyranny. Taking Adam captive, the devil enslaves him to sin.[65] Justly, the mutability and sin Adam sought willingly he now bears unwillingly, as punishment.[66]

With the original relationship of soul ruling body inverted, human nature is now one of weakness (*infirmitas*) and corruption (*corruptio*), bequeathed to future generations in Original Sin.[67] Contemplative union with God is lost; the mind is darkened (*obscuritas, tenebrae*), and reason is blind (*caecus*).[68] The mind has no sense of direction and, quite bewildered, becomes scattered (*dispergitus*) and lost (*perditus*).[69] Deprived of reason's strength, the soul cannot overcome the body's corruption—its vulnerability to pleasure.[70] Taking charge, the body compels the soul to follow, dragging it down to earth and sin. Gregory assigns major responsibility for sin to the body, inherently weak and corrupt. Siding with ascetics, he departs from Augustine for whom the locus of sin was the will, whether divided, or gratuitously evil. Disgustingly, the "garment" of the body generates its own destruction, being the source of pleasurable sensations

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are inseparable. See *Mor.* 34.21.40 (CCSL 143B:1761–62); *Mor.* 29.8.18 (CCSL 143B:1446); *Mor.* 8.10.19 (CCSL 143:395); *Mor.* 26.44.79 (CCSL 143B:1325–26); *Mor.* 29.8.18 (CCSL 143B:1446); *HEv.* 1.19.2 (CCSL 141:143). In contrast, Augustine views pride and self-love as the primary sin. The desire to be independent of God precedes the appetite for pleasure, which is its punishment, see *De civ. Dei* 14.13ff.

[64] *Mor.* 26.17.28 (CCSL 143B:1286); *Mor.* 8.32.51 (CCSL 143:422), *Mor.* 8.6.8 (CCSL 143:386); *Mor.* 9.5.5 (CCSL 143:458); cf. Aug. *De civ. Dei* 14.17 and *in psalm.* 58, 2.11. These ideas are traditional; see Norman P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin* (London, 1938), p. 244; and Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (London, 1919), p. 243.

[65] The devil even forcefully abducted Adam, who resisted, and dragged him to consent, see *Mor.* 15.15.19 (CCSL 143A:790). See also, e.g. *Mor.* 32.21.40 (CCSL 143B:1659); *HEz.* 1.11.24 (CCSL 142:179–80); *Mor.* 9.36.58 (CCSL 143:498–99); *Mor.* 35.17.43 (CCSL 143B:1805).

[66] *Mor.* 4.25.47 (CCSL 143:192); cf. *Mor.* 8.32.52 (CCSL 143:423); *Mor.* 4.28.51 (CCSL 143:194–96.

[67] *Mor.* 24.2.4 (CCSL 143B:1191). On Original Sin, see Weber, *Hauptfragen*, pp. 230–33.

[68] For the fall, see esp. *Mor.* 4.1.4 (CCSL 143:166); *Mor.* 4.27.49 (CCSL 143:193); *Mor.* 8.18.34 (CCSL 143:406); *Dial.* 4.1.1–3 (SC 265:18–20).

[69] A Plotinian theme, see Aug. *conf.* 2.1.1ff.; 2.20.18; 4.7.12; 7.10.16; 10.29.40.

[70] *Mor.* 4.27.49 (CCSL 143:193). See esp. the overview by Ferruccio Gastaldelli, "Il meccanismo psicologico del peccato nei *Moralia in Job* di San Gregorio Magno," *Salesianum* 27 (1965), 563–605, at 565–66; idem, "Prospettive sul peccato in San Gregorio Magno," *Salesianum* 28 (1966), 65–94.

which fly into the soul like "moths" (cf. Job 13:28).[71] Similarly, "the worms are our mother and sister" (cf. Job 17:14). Born in corruption, we carry it with us and cannot escape its pollution.[72] Inexorably, sin becomes the punishment of sin.[73]

To manage sin, Gregory creates various categories. Adapting Augustine, he identifies three "ways" (*modi*) of explaining why we sin—from "ignorance" (*ignorantia*), "weakness" (*infirmitas*), or "deliberate intention" (*studium*).[74] Using Augustine's three stages of sin (suggestion, pleasure, and consent), Gregory explains sin as a process, almost a drama. Sometimes he adds a fourth stage (as Augustine did), the *defensionis audacia*, a shameless defense of sin, highlighting penitence:[75] had Adam repented, he would not have lost Paradise. Gregory's tropological exegesis of the Fall implies that the fatal seduction of pleasure causes most sins. Recapitulating the stages of Adam's sin, from the exterior inward, the serpent tempts, because the enemy insinuates evil into the heart; Eve was delighted, because the flesh takes pleasure; Adam, though placed above Eve, nevertheless consented, because when the flesh enjoys pleasure, the spirit is weakened and incapable of righteousness; nor would Adam confess, because the more sin separates the spirit from truth, the more wickedness hardens in audacity.[76] Sin progresses like falling dominoes; but by labeling each part, Gregory marks where the sequence might be halted or undone. Avoid temptations. If tempted, repress pleasure. If delighted, refuse consent. If sinful, confess.

In *Mor.* 31.45.87, Gregory adapts Cassian's taxonomy of principal vices to defend the heavenly order of hierarchy.[77] Reversing Cassian's order (and following Augustine's sentiments), Gregory places Cassian's gluttony

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[71] Job 13:28, "qui quasi putredo consumendus sum et quasi vestimentum quod comeditur a tinea": *Mor.* 5.38.68 (CCSL 143:268); cf. *Mor.* 11.48.64 (CCSL 143A:622).

[72] Job 17:14, "putredini dixi pater meus es mater mea et soror mea vermibus": *Mor.* 13.45.50 (CCSL 143A:695).

[73] *HEz.* 1.11.24 (CCSL 142:179–80).

[74] *Mor.* 25.11.28 (CCSL 143B:1253–54); probably inspired by Aug. *lib. arb.* 3.20. Apart from rare instances of deliberate evil (e.g. the malice of hypocrites), sin is the result of seduction.

[75] *Mor.* 4.27.49 (CCSL 143:193). Four stages of sin appear also in *RP* 3.29 (SC 383:474). Three stages appear in *HEv.* 1.16.1 (CCSL 141:110); *Ep.* 11.56a.9 (MGH Epp. 2:343), *Mor.* 32.19.33 (CCSL 143B:1654). The differing stages are best seen as variations determined by Gregory's exegetical and pastoral concerns, because it is not a chronological evolution.

[76] *Mor.* 4.27.49 (CCSL 143:193); see also *Mor.* 32.21.40 (CCSL 143B:1659).

[77] *Mor.* 31.45.87–90 (CCSL 143B:1610–12); see Carole Straw, "Gregory, Cassian, and the Cardinal Vices," in *In the Garden of Evil: Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Newhauser, Papers in Mediaeval Studies 18 (Toronto, 2005), pp. 35–58.

with pride, calling it the root of all evil.[78] When *discretio* is lost, the soul is defenseless. Pride conquers the heart, unleashing an army of vices. In succession, "vainglory", "envy", "anger", "melancholy", "avarice", "gluttony" and "lust" lay waste to the soul.[79] Moral devolution begins when, like Adam, subjects break free of authority to gratify themselves unrestrainedly. Full of themselves, they preen in false glory and grow envious of others. When thwarted, they get angry like spoiled children, then sullen and melancholy. To fill that inner loss, sinners become avaricious, greedy for possessions, and then greedy for food. Their gluttony generates excessive humours that fuel lust, the final, bestial depravity.[80] Gregory's selfish sinners aggrandize themselves to the point of bursting. "Scattering" and "losing" themselves in the world, they are haunted by an inner emptiness. In comparison, saints are focused. "Self-collected" (*se colligere*), continent (*continens*) and "stable" (*stabilis*), they possess *soliditas caritatis*, the firm and enduring strength of love, the mother of virtue.[81]

Lessons of the Fall: Love and the Imitation of Christ

The lessons of the Fall are not only that rational control of the body depends on submission to God, but that despising justice—the heavenly government of hierarchy—endangers the whole community.[82] To seek autonomy is profoundly selfish. Harmony is impossible if every man is for himself; the result is anarchy and war. Obedience to authority guarantees that each keeps a proper place; humility is fundamental. Diversity means the reciprocal sharing of gifts in compassion, interdependence and concord. Love of one's neighbour as well as love of God define Christian identity: "Not otherwise than by clinging to God in contemplation, and having compassion for [our] neighbour are we made members of our Redeemer".[83]

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[78] *Mor.* 31.45.87 (CCSL 143B:1610); *Mor.* 34.23.47 (CCSL 143B:1766).

[79] *Superbia, inanis gloria, inuidia, ira, melancholia, auaritia, uentris ingluuies, luxuria*: *Mor.* 31.45.87 (CCSL 143B:1610); cf. *Mor.* 1.32.42 (CCSL 143:84). On the affinity of vices, see also *HEz.* 1.12.25–28 (CCSL 142:197–99); *Mor.* 7.28.35 (CCSL 143:359).

[80] Cf. *HEz.* 2.7.16–20 (CCSL 142:329–33).

[81] See Straw, *Gregory the Great*, chs 3–4.

[82] *Mor.* 9.5.5 (CCSL 143:458).

[83] *HEv.* 2.39.9 (CCSL 141:390): "Neque enim aliter Redemptoris nostri membra efficimur, nisi inhaerendo Deo et compatiendo proximo".

Selfishness is, in effect, the archetypal sin; selflessness—disinterested love (*caritas*) and compassion (*compassio*)—are the remedies. Love is the "root" (*radix*) and "mother" (*mater*) of all virtues.[84] Virtues are interconnected, as the Stoics taught;[85] and compassion is best understood as love in action. The basis of ideal social and political order,[86] love is the foundation of morality since it unites the dissociated, joins the diverse, and sets right what is wrong.[87] Compassion goes beyond the golden rule of "do unto others" (cf. Matt. 7:12) to return good for evil;[88] it is self-sacrificial. To paraphrase Gregory, you must give of yourself in compassion for others, even as Christ did. Unless you take on grief yourself, you do not really share their tribulations, or relieve their burdens.[89] Compassion is the sacrifice of one's soul, as abstinence is of the body, and Christians must suffer this "cross through affliction of the soul with compassion for [thy] neighbour" as they do a "cross through affliction of the body with abstinence".[90] In fact, "the more sharply we control ourselves, and are tortured with the compassion of love toward our neighbours", the more truly we follow Christ.[91]

For Gregory, the active life of compassion means a special sacrifice of contemplative retreat and ascetic perfection, putting one's own soul at risk. Adjusting to this, he concludes that perfection actually lies in imperfection: in engaging in the world, despite its sin; in humbly confessing one's inevitable sin.[92] The change from a contemplative life to a mixed life

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[84] *Radix, HEv.* 2.27.1 (CCSL 141:229); *mater, Reg.* 5.46 (CCSL 140:338).

[85] E.g. *Mor.* 22.1.2–3 (CCSL 143B:1042–43); *Mor.* 1.27.38 (CCSL 143:82–83); *HEz.*1.3.8 (CCSL 142:37); *HEz.* 2.7.7 (CCSL 142:320–22); *HEz.* 2.20.18 (CCSL 142:393–94); *HEz.* 1.9.31 (CCSL 142:159–60). Cf. Ambr. *off.* 2.43; also 1.129; 2.48. See Odo Lottin, "La Connexion des vertues avant saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 2 (1930), 21–53.

[86] *HEv.* 2.27.1 (CCSL 141:230); *Reg.* 7.28 (CCSL 140:486); *Mor.* 1.26.37 (CCSL 143:45); *Mor.* 10.6.9 (CCSL 143:541); *Reg.* 9.223 (CCSL 140A:795); *Reg.* 6.61 (CCSL 140:434); *Mor.* 31.45.87 (CCSL 143B:1610). See Patrick Catry, "L'Amour du prochain chez saint Grégoire le grand," *Studia monastica* 20 (1978), pp. 287–344.

[87] *Reg.* 9.223 (CCSL 140A:794–95); cf. *Reg.* 7.27 (CCSL 140:486) and *Reg.* 6.61 (CCSL 140:434).

[88] *Mor.* 10.6.8 (CCSL 143:540); see also *RP* 3.27 (SC 382:250).

[89] *HEz.* 1.11.27 (CCSL 142:183); *Mor.* 20.36.70 (CCSL 143A:1055); also *Mor.* 20.36.68 (CCSL 143A:1053).

[90] Cf. *HEv.* 2.32.3 (CCSL 141:280): "aut per abstinentiam afficitur corpus, aut per compassionem proximi affligitur animus"; repeated in *HEv.* 2.39.10 (CCSL 141:391).

[91] *Mor.* 30.25.74 (CCSL 143B:1542): "quanto acrius et se edomant, et erga proximos suos caritatis compassione cruciantur".

[92] E.g. *Mor.* 5.4.5 (CCSL 143:222): *Mor.* 31.13.25 (CCSL 143B:1568); *Mor.* 4.23.43 (CCSL 143:189); *Mor.* 34.22.45 (CCSL 143B:1765); *Mor.* 4.36.72 (CCSL 143:216–17); *Mor.* 5.16.33 (CCSL

of activity and contemplation is, in the end, progress. At first, the righteous seek a contemplative life, separated from earthly men and their business, but are unable to prefer adversity and the tortures of the present life.[93] Then the soul "cared only for its own interests" and "loathed to bear the burdens of others"; "sympathizing too little with others", it could not "bear adversities".[94] But "progressing" (*proficiens*), the soul bears "the weakness of the neighbour" and gains the strength to "surmount adversity", because paradoxically the soul becomes "upright by bending, expanded by nearing others [and] strengthened by compassion". Now, the soul "seeks the tortures of this life" it once feared, and "deems sweet whatever is bitter in life".[95] Marvellously, contemplation actually depends on active compassion for one's neighbour: "for love, which lowers us according to the power of our compassion, lifts us the higher toward the peak of contemplation".[96]

This synthesis rationalizing the "mixed life" is a milestone. Gregory's affirmation of involvement in the world (including the secular power of the Church), his recognition of human frailty and his emphasis on compassion enhanced the chances of the Church's long-term survival as an inclusive Church embracing members of dissimilar wealth, education, sex, occupations, and interests, while acknowledging the material as well as spiritual needs of believers.[97]

143:241); *Mor.* 5.3.4–4.5 (CCSL 143:220–22); *Mor.* 3.16.30 (CCSL 143:134–35); *HEv.* 2.21.4 (CCSL 141:176).

[93] *Mor.* 7.13.16 (CCSL 143:343–45).

[94] *Mor.* 7.15.18 (CCSL 143:345–46): "Mens enim iusti proficiens quae prius, dum sola propria curaret, ferre aliena fastidiebat; quae minus alienis compatiens, conualescere contra aduersa non poterat, cum ad toleranda proximi infirma se attrahit ad aduersa superanda conualescit. Ita ut pro amore ueritatis praesentis uitae cruciatus tanto post fortis appetat, quanto prius infirma fugiebat. Inclinatione namque sua erigitur, attractione tenditur, compassione roboratur; cumque se in amorem proximi dilatat quasi ex meditatione colligit quanta fortitudine in auctorem surgat. Caritas namque quae nos ad uim compassionis humiliat, altius in culmine contemplationis leuat; et multiplicata iam maioribus desideriis aestuat, iam peruenire ad uitam spiritus, etiam per cruciatus corporis, anhelat. Quod ergo prius tangere nolebat, hoc post prae angustia comedit qui desideria sua uix capiens, et ipsas quas dudum timuerat, iam prae amore caelestis patriae poenas amat. Si enim mens in deum forti intentione dirigitur, quicquid sibi in hac uita amarum fit, dulce aestimat, omne quod affligit requiem putat."

[95] *Mor.* 7.15.17 (CCSL 143:345): "Quos enim ad fortia trahere nitimur, eorum necesse est ut infirma toleremus quia nec iacentem erigit, nisi qui status sui rectitudinem per compassionem flectit."

[96] *Mor.* 7.15.18 (CCSL 143:345).

[97] See esp. his letter of advice to Augustine of Canterbury, *Ep.* 11.56a.8 (MGH Epp. 2:338).

Redemption, the Body and Christ

The body plays a central role in salvation, just as it did in the Fall. Because Adam bore weakness from the flesh, humanity deserves mercy after sinning; but the devil had no body and no excuses.[98] Marvellously, God's mercy *is* justice: to redeem and bring back the one who had fallen, to restore the flesh that sinned.[99] Paradoxically (providentially), the mutability that caused ruin brings restoration; the curse becomes a blessing: "Indeed, the human soul would not fall if it were not changeable; and banished from the joys of paradise, if it were not changeable, it would never return to life".[100] Now a vessel of discipline, the body's sufferings benefit the soul. The corruption Adam sought becomes his punishment; and the punishment, the cure:[101]

> Because we have followed the flesh through the sight of the eyes, we are tortured by that very flesh which we preferred to God's commands. We suffer sorrow, torture, and death in it daily so that by a marvellous dispensation the Lord might convert the cause of sin into a means of punishment; so that the severity of punishment might arise from the same source as sin, so that man might be disciplined to life by the bitter suffering of that very flesh by whose prideful delight man drew near death.

Providentially, the body's sinful pleasure is reversed to purgative suffering. Penitence replaces pleasure.[102] "If we sin much through the delights of the flesh, we are purged by the afflictions of the flesh".[103] Dialectically, "through whippings, the sinner is brought back to peace with God".[104] Suffering is penitence, both punishment and a cure of sin.

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[98] *Mor.* 4.3.8 (CCSL 143:168–69).

[99] *Mor.* 4.3.8 (CCSL 143:168–69).

[100] *Mor.* 25.6.10 (CCSL 143B:1235); "Humana quippe anima in lapsum non caderet, si mutabilis non fuisset; quae a paradisi quoque gaudiis expulsa, si mutabilis non esset, ad uitam minime rediret"; also *Mor.* 29.10.21 (CCSL 143B:1448).

[101] *Mor.* 24.4.7 (CCSL 143B:1193); "Et quia per oculorum uisum carnem secuti sumus, de ipsa carne, quam praeceptis Dei praeposuimus, flagellamur. In ipsa quippe cotidie gemitum, in ipsa cruciatum, in ipsa interitum patimur, ut hoc nobis mira dispositione Dominus in poenam uerteret, per quod fecimus culpam; nec aliunde esset interim censura supplicii, nisi unde fuerat causa peccati, ut eius carnis amaritudine homo eruditetur ad uitam, cuius oblectatione superbiae peruenit ad mortem"; cf. Aug. *quaest. Simpl.* 83. q. 82.3; Ruf. *Orig. prin.* 2.10.6.

[102] *HEv.* 1.2.8 (CCSL 141:8); *HEz.* 1.5.2 (CCSL 142:758).

[103] *Reg.* 11.18 (CCSL 140A:887): "Quoniam qui ex carnis blandimento multa peccauimus, ex carnis afflictione purgamur".

[104] *Mor.* 3.9.15 (CCSL 143:124): "ad pacem illius per flagella redeamus".

Gregory also stresses Christ's suffering and sacrifice in humanity's redemption, though he also reiterates old traditions. The devil's legal claim on humanity's debt of sin is paid—redeemed—by Christ.[105] Christ's divinity is a hook, his humanity the bait used to trick and to catch the really big fish, Leviathan.[106] Christ dies vicariously to recompense humanity's offense against God; his innocent suffering and death propitiate God's wrath.[107] But Gregory wants to highlight human responsibility, so Christ's natures and actions become complementary. The person of Christ is electrum, an alloy of gold and silver, his two natures. As gold is tempered by silver, so manhood's suffering tempers divinity, and as silver is enhanced by gold, so divinity renders humanity more glorious.[108] As physician of like and unlike remedies, Christ applies his manhood to agree with our nature, and yet offers his divine righteousness to cure our sin.[109] He is both redeemer and teacher because salvation requires both. As mediator, Christ teaches "the guilty righteousness by the same means he placated the angry Judge".[110] His Passion not only redeems humanity, it teaches by example, just as the whole of his incarnate life teaches us and is also a sacrificial offering that atones for our sins.[111] Salvation is a cooperative venture; free will must respond to grace; predestination is arranged so that the elect attain it "through their own effort" (*ex labore*).[112] That Christ's death propitiates God means that he may look favourably on our good works and penitence. Conditions are set for God's mercy, but there are no guarantees.

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[105] *Mor.* 3.16.29 (CCSL 143:133–34); *Mor.* 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A:877–78); *Mor.* 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A:877–78), cf. Ambr. *Ep.* 72.8; *Isaac.* 1.3.10; *Ep.* 41.7; Aug. *trin.* 13.15.

[106] Gregory of Nyssa's fishhook story comes via Ruf. *symb.* 16.

[107] *Mor.* 3.14.26–7 (CCSL 143:131–32); *Mor.* 24.2.2 (CCSL 143B:1189–90); *Mor.* 2.22.41 (CCSL 143:84); cf. *Mor.* 3.20.38 (CCSL 143:139); *Mor.* 17.30.46 (CCSL 143A:877–78). See Jean Rivière, *Le Dogme de la rédemption après saint Augustin* (Paris, 1930), p. 94; Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor*, trans. A.G. Herbert (New York, 1969), p. 68.

[108] *Mor.* 28.1.5 (CCSL 143B:1398); cf. *HEz.* 1.2.14 (CCSL 142:25).

[109] *Mor.* 24.2.2 (CCSL 143B:1189); *HEz.* 1.2.9ff. (CCSL 142:22ff). See esp. Adolf Harnack, *Medizinisches aus der ältesten Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig, 1892), 4:136ff. G. Dumeige, "Le Christ médecin dans la littérature chrétienne des premiers siècles," *Rivista de archeologia cristiana* 48 (1972), 115–41.

[110] *Mor.* 9.38.61 (CCSL 143:501): "unde reum recta docuit, inde iratum iudicem placauit".

[111] *Mor.* 34.23.54 (CCSL143B:1772); *RP* 1.3 (SC 381:138), cf. Leo, *Tractatus.* 67.5; 45.2; 63.1. 45.

[112] *Dial.* 1.8.5 (SC 260:74). On cooperation, see *Mor.* 16.25.30 (CCSL 143A:816); *Mor.* 33.21.40 (CCSL 143B:1710): *Mor.* 24.10.24 (CCSL 143B:1204): *Mor.* 18.40.63 (CCSL 143A:929); *Mor.* 24.7.13 (CCSL 143B:1196–97); *HEz.* 1.9.2 (CCSL 142:124). Gregory's ideas of grace are closest to those of Cassian; see esp. *conl.* 13.618, and Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 110–36.

Christ's mediation with God on our behalf is not distant and abstract, but concrete, and immediately available in the Mass through the mystical participation of Christ's members in his sacrifice. Significantly, Gregory also makes the Mass the occasion for individual vows of self-sacrifice, so it is both a sacrament and an individual discipline:[113]

> We must immolate ourselves to God in contrition of heart whenever we offer the Mass, since we who celebrate the mysteries of the Lord's Passion ought to imitate what we do. For then the Victim will be truly offered to God or us, when we offer ourselves as victim.

To make the sacrifice of the Mass truly effective, Christians must pledge themselves as sacrifices. Imitation is necessary not only to activate Christ's sacrifice; it is what one owes him (i.e. distributive justice).[114] Christians should be martyrs in times of peace,[115] willing to suffer without complaint, given the redeemer's suffering, and like Paul, continue Christ's suffering in their bodies (Col 1:24).[116] Fortunately, sacrifice includes offerings of good works generally: contemplation, charitable deeds, prayer; virtually any good. Although such sacrifices are necessary as repayment of Christ's redemption,[117] they can still atone for sins, and earn reward.[118] (Similarly, gifts of grace must be returned to God as good works, but they can still earn merit.)[119] Christ's redemption means a just universe in which human actions are not dismissed out of hand by an omnipotent God; they matter.

Theodicy

Gregory's just order of Providence assumes the underlying unity of creation, despite the oppositions of this world and the next, body and soul,

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[113] *Dial.* 4.61.1 (SC 265:202); "sed necesse est ut, cum hoc agimus, nosmetipsos deo in cordis contritione mactemus, quia qui passionis dominicae mysteria celebramus, debemus imitari quod agimus. Tunc ergo uere pro nobis deo hostia erit, cum nos ipsos hostiam fecerit". See also *Cant.* 4 (CCSL 144:6–7); *HEv.* 2.37.7–9 (CCSL 141:354–55), cf. Ruf. *Orig. in lev.* 9.2.

[114] *Mor.* 13.23.26 (CCSL 143A:683); *HEv.* 1.5.2 (CCSL 141:34).

[115] *Dial.* 3.26.9 (SC 260:372).

[116] *HEz.* 2.9.22 (CCSL 142:376–77); *Mor.* 29.1.1 (CCSL 143B:1434); *Mor.* 30.1.3 (CCSL 143B:1492–93); *Mor.* 29.14.26 (CCSL 143B: 1451–52).

[117] *Mor.* 13.23.26 (CCSL 143A:682–83); *Mor.* 33.12.24 (CCSL 143B:1694); *Mor.* 9.43.95 (CCSL 143:524); *Mor.* 12.51.57 (CCSL 143A:662–63).

[118] *Mor.* 6.37.56 (CCSL 143:325–26); see also *HEz.* 2.9.2 (CCSL 142:356–57); *HEz.* 2.10.19f. (CCSL 142:394ff.). Cf. Aug. *De civ. Dei* 10.6; Ruf. *Orig. in lev.* 2.4.

[119] *Mor.* 9.41.64 (CCSL 143:503).

etc., but that of God and the devil is perhaps more disturbing than marvellous, because evil is so massive a force. Since the Creator is almighty and the devil has no power, fine distinctions must shield God from blame. A legal "contract" (*pactum*) specifies their collaboration. Derived from God, the devil's power to destroy is just, but he acts from his own wickedness. The devil acts as God's servant, fulfilling God's will in exchange for the gratification of his own depravity. Both the will of the Just Dispensator and the perverse desires of the devil are satisfied.[120] This providential relationship is bizarrely dialectical: "in the secret order of the dispensation, when the devil is permitted to rage, then the kindness of God is brought about in mercy".[121] God is the judge, and the devil is his *exactor*, the agent delivering the punishment of God's strict severity.[122] As collaborators, the devil's robbers are also God's robbers; evil spirits, spirits of the Lord.[123]

Apparently, the devil is just a faithful instrument of God's wrath with benefits. In fact, evil is so ominous, Gregory comments that God is proved almighty by cutting short the devil's whipping of Job,[124] as if it were a relief to learn that God actually *could* restrain the devil, if he so chose. That God is in charge of the devil only makes God the more frightening. He is like a mother, who, one moment, beats her child as if she had never loved him, and the next, loves him as if she had never beaten him.[125] God's power is ambivalent and capricious—mercy and justice, grace and wrath. To know that God is the author of suffering, that his will is by definition justice, is not necessarily reassuring.

So it is for Job, whose story is universal (or nearly so). For most, life is a mixture of good and evil. Fortune does not always reflect one's work or moral character (or lack of either). Challenged by the devil, God afflicts Job as a loyalty test. Would Job thank God for his beatings, even as he thanked him for his gifts?[126] Or is Job's piety dependent upon God's gifts?

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[120] *Mor.* 33.14.28 (CCSL 143B:1697–98): "Haec ipsa ergo temptationis licentia pactum uocatur, in qua et desiderium temptatoris agitur, et tamen per eam miro modo uoluntas iusti dispensatoris impletur".

[121] *Mor.* 33.14.28 (CCSL 143B:1698): "secreto ergo dispensationis ordine, unde saeuire permittitur iniquitas diaboli, inde pie perficitur benignitas dei".

[122] *HEv.* 2.39.5 (CCSL 141:385); *Mor.* 4.35.69 (CCSL 143:214); cf. *Mor.* 4.35.69 (CCSL 143:214); *Mor.* 2.11.19 (CCSL 143:71); *Mor.* 32.24.50 (CCSL 143B:1668). For Augustine the devil is also the exactor; cf. Jean Rivière, *Le Dogme de la rédemption après saint Augustin* (Paris, 1930), p. 71.

[123] *Mor.* 14.51–52.59–60 (CCSL 143A:733–34); *Mor.* 18.2.4 (CCSL 143A:887–88).

[124] *Mor. Praef.* 5.12 (CCSL 143:18).

[125] *HEz.* 1.1.18 (CCSL 142:15).

[126] *Mor. Praef.* 3.7 (CCSL 143:13).

God sends his wrath to prove Job's virtue, adversity being the "whip" that reveals the raw "bones" of virtue hidden under the "fat" of prosperity.[127] Job endures suffering (*patientia*) and continues to thank God. His righteousness is proved by confessing God's absolute power, while he is but "dust and ashes".

The lesson is that prosperity can mean either election or abandonment; but then so can adversity. Throughout his works, Gregory spells out the various possibilities of God's ambiguous providential order, departing from Augustine for whom mystery vouchsafes God's transcendence. Unwilling to leave believers in suspense, Gregory offers a roadmap with clear directions home. Granted, at times signs may point both ways, but a map is still preferable to a mystery. Space permits only an outline of his roadmap,[128] which embodies the same penchant for systematizing data found in *Pastoral Rule.* Prosperity may reward virtue in anticipation of heaven; its recollection can console Christians in tough times, saving them from ruin. Or, it can seduce the soul with myriad temptations, or lead to pride - the mistaken belief one actually deserves God's gracious gifts. It may turn out to be the only happiness the damned ever enjoy. Adversity may be a foretaste of hell's punishments. Or it can be a temporary "beating" that purges sin, restoring the soul to health. Alternatively, it can break the soul if it evokes blasphemous anger or leads to despair. But it can also prove the soul's mettle, by exposing virtues hidden in prosperity. It can even be an opportunity to increase merits. While God is in Gregory's details, the short solution is for Christians to treat everything as a trial.

Gregory confesses what Augustine never does, that in afflicting Job, God punished an innocent man. Yet, God does not afflict unjustly, not because Original Sin makes Job guilty, as Augustine claimed, but because God recompenses suffering that is in excess of the debt owed for sin. God rewarded Job with twice the blessings lost.[129] This is an important legacy for the future. Gregory embraces suffering and affliction as necessary for salvation, as a purification of sins, a trial proving virtue, an opportunity to earn merit, a sacrifice in imitation of Christ, and a repayment of Christ's sacrifice. Gregory gilds the Christian tradition that life is suffering, and

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[127] *Mor.* 23.25.52 (CCSL 143B:1185).

[128] See Carole Straw, "'Adversitas' et 'prosperitas': une illustration du motif structurel de la complémentarité," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al., pp. 277–288; also treated throughout Straw, *Gregory the Great.*

[129] Job 42:10. *Mor.* 32.4.5 (CCSL 143B:1630–31); *Mor.* 14.31.36 (CCSL 143A:719–20); *Mor.* 24.18.44 (CCSL 143B:1221–22).

while he condemns excesses,[130] his rhetoric of the *flagella Dei* could nevertheless support them.

Discretio and Self-Husbandry

Following the ancient tradition of spiritual training, especially the Stoics's use of *discretio*,[131] Gregory elaborates methods and strategies to manage sin: how to pique conscience, strengthen self-control, and defeat sin; how to examine one's conscience for sins, eradicate them, and cleanse away guilt. His step-by-step analysis of conscience and techniques of self-control are a significant contribution to the tradition of penitence. Always the pedagogue, his exhaustive descriptions of mental processes and emotional changes serve as "how-to" instructions to practice on one's own.

Variously imagined,[132] *discretio* is a spirit, virtue, power, or art that is exact, zealous, and anxious. Sharpened by contemplation, it can be a discriminating nose, an illuminating light, or an eye; all perceive spiritual realities or ideals: invisible spirits, the condition of a soul, the examples of saints, or the nature of virtue itself. These truths can be painful. In contemplation of God's perfection, *discretio* also measures one's distance from it, causing the soul to rebound (*reuerberatio*), humbled by the recognition of its faults.[133] This makes *discretio* essential to penitence. *Discretio* can also represent ideals of human behaviour. As a line, rule, way, or measure, it marks the mean between extremes,[134] and it distinguishes necessary

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[130] See *Mor.* 20.41.78 (CCSL 143A:1061) and *Mor.* 9.66.106 (CCSL 143:531–32).

[131] On *discretio*, see esp. Eloi Dekkers, "'Discretio' chez Benoit et saint Grégoire," *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 46 (1984), 79–88; Dagens, *Grégoire*, pp. 117–24. On Cassian's idea of *discretio*, see Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1968), esp. pp. 82–136 and 148–62.

[132] E.g. *spiritus, HEz.* 2.9.19 (CCSL 143:373); *uirtus, Mor.* 11.6.8 (CCSL 143A:389); *uis, HEv.*2.24.1 (CCSL 141:197); *ars, RP* 3.37 (SC 382:524); *subtilitas, Mor.* 28.11.26 (CCSL 143B:1415); *zelum, HEz.* 2.1018 CCSL 142:39); *sollicitudo, Mor.* 1.35.50 (CCSL 143:51); *nasus, RP* 1.11 (SC 381:166); *lumen, Mor.* 28.11.30 (CCSL 143B:1419); *oculum, Mor.* 33.35.60 (CCSL 143B:1724–26); *libra, Mor.* 3.13.24 (CCSL 143:130); *truitina, Mor.* 8.4.5 (CCSL 143:384); *examen, Mor.* 6.16.25 (CCSL 143:302); *regula, Mor.* 5.30.53 (CCSL 143:255); *uia, Mor.* 15.51.57 (CCSL 143A:785); *mensura, RP* 1.11 (SC 381:166); *chorda, Mor.* 1.8.11 (CCSL 143:30); *ordo, Mor.* 1.30.42 (CCSL 143:47); *ratio, Mor.* 30.10.40 (CCSL 143B:1519); *moderamen, Mor.* 7.30.42 (CCSL 143:366). All have the genitive, *discretionis*.

[133] E.g. *HEz.* 2.5.10 (CCSL 142:282); *Mor.* 6.37.53 (CCSL 143:829).

[134] E.g. *HEz.* 1.5.3 (CCSL 142:58); *Mor.* 2.49.76 (CCSL 143:105); *Mor.* 9.66.106 (CCSL 143:531); *Mor.* 1.34.47 (CCSL 143:51); *HEz.* 1.7.2 (CCSL 142:83–84); *Mor.* 28.11.29 (CCSL 143B:1417): *Mor.* 9.25.39 (CCSL 143:483–84); *HEz.* 1.3.8 (CCSL 142:37); cf. Ambr. *Isaac.* 2.5–6; Cic. *Tusc.* 3.7.15; 4.20.46; 8.16–18; Arist. *Nich. Eth.* 2.5.

needs from pleasurable excess.[135] It is both the ideal of moderation, and the ability to moderate behaviour. As scales, balances, or the tongue of a balance, *discretio* calculates, reckons, or weighs evidence, or apportions things so they are equitable and just. As a bow or stringed instrument kept at the proper tension, it manifests the ability to restrain, or redouble efforts when necessary. *Discretio* is order, computation; a means of managing or governing, basically the faculty of self-control.

Discretio and reason guard the soul,[136] defending the innermost doors of consent against intruders. *Discretio* is a wily horse whose nose sniffs the battle at a distance and warns of enemies. As a rod or hand, it repels enemies, dismisses temptations, or restrains sinful impulses. Using *discretio*, one makes a rational decision to combat sins, to act in spite of one's own desires (*redarguere*). To limit temptation, the monastic grave is safest, where monk and world are dead to each other, a mutual crucifixion.[137] But if one must live in the world, *discretio* preserves an internal separation from the external world and the office assumed. Outwardly, one acts with authority on God's behalf; but inwardly, one imagines his strict judgement and is humble. Sometimes, the mind-body connection affords diversionary tactics. In tranquility, the mind can easily succumb to the adversary's temptations, Gregory observes, but by divine medicine, external burdens—just keeping busy—can preserve the soul from harm. Similarly, external hardships, or "beatings", protect one from internal wounds, just as physicians draw out inflammation of the bowels by causing an itching of the skin (or Benedict cures his lust with thorns).[138] In this case, worldly involvement is actually curative.

Consent to pleasure brings culpability; *discretio* is the rational power to "just say 'No' " to pleasurable sensations one cannot help feeling. But this simple rational rejection is not always effective; *discretio* cannot always shut the gates. Adversity can overturn the soul, leaving it prey to anger and despair. Demons can sneak into the soul uninvited;[139] the devil can ambush

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[135] *Mor.* 20.14.28 (CCSL 143A:1024–25); *Mor.* 30.18.61–63 (CCSL 143B:1532–34); *Mor.* 15.48.54 (CCSL 143A:782–83); cf. Cass. *inst.* 5.6.

[136] Selective examples of guardian imagery are: *ianua cordis, Mor.* 27.26.50 (CCSL 143B:1370–71); *equus, Mor.* 31.44.85 (CCSL 143B:1608–9); *manus, Mor.* 16.43.53 (CCSL 143A: 829); *Mor.* 28.11.26–29 (CCSL 143B:1415–18); *uirga, RP* 2.6 (SC 381:216).

[137] *Mor.* 6.37.56 (CCSL 143:325–26) and *Mor.* 5.3.4 (CCSL 143:220–21).

[138] *Mor.* 33.19.35 (CCSL 143B:1797); for Benedict see *Dial.* 2.2.2 (SC 260:138).

[139] That demons enter the soul or heart (cf. John 13:27; 13:2) is not heterodoxy, but a statement of fact about our weakened condition. To reject this is Pelagianism, a denial of humanity's inborn sinfulness; see *Reg.* 7.31 (CCSL 140:494); cf. *Mor.* 32.19.34 (CCSL 143B:1655); *Mor.* 33.3.6 (CCSL 143B:1674).

the soul and invade it forcibly. Once inside, sins stick to the soul and cannot be dismissed at will. Once settled, sins are very difficult to dislodge.

Should sin seem unavoidable, Gregory offers a fail-safe strategy. Peter "opened the gate of his heart" by denying Christ (Mark 14:66–72); but suddenly recovering himself, he "shut it with tears".[140] Penitential tears drown temptation; fear of judgement freezes desire in its tracks. As a discipline, a deliberate practice, crying whenever temptation strikes is a means of self-control. The success of all such "behavioural modifications" is not the eradication of feelings, but rather the rational decision to practice the techniques over and over again—to submit to the discipline. The goal is not victory, but perseverance. "In patience he has possession of his own soul", Gregory quotes Luke 21:19, imagining the soul as an embattled citadel. "By the strength through which he conquered all adversities, he has conquered himself, and made master of himself".[141] The ability to endure, to suffer assaults without giving up the fight, *is* self-mastery.

Penitence as the Cornerstone of Christian Life

Admittedly, vulnerabilities seem limitless. Because "we are conceived in sin and born in iniquity, we either commit evils viciously, or even in doing right things, we sin unintentionally".[142] While evil works might easily be avoided, "who can comprehend how many evils we commit each moment through the inconstant motions of our thoughts?"[143] As much as Augustine, Gregory is haunted by the unknown movements of the human heart. Judgement seems unbearable. We may shun known evils, but we fear more unknown evils and face judgement with a more subtle terror.[144] Because one must recompense so much sin—the known, the probable, the possible, and even the unknown—the burden of guilt is incalculable, along with the dread of punishment.

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[140] *Mor.* 27. 26.50 (CCSL 143B:1371): "ianuam cordis Petrus negando aperuit, sed citius cognoscendo restitit, flendo clausit".

[141] *Mor.* 5.16.33 (CCSL 143:241): "quia inde contra aduersa omnia fortis efficitur, unde sibi et semetipsum uincendo dominator".

[142] *Mor.* 9.48.73 (CCSL 143:508): "Quia autem nos in delicto concepti, in iniquitatibus editi, aut noxie praua perpetramus, aut incaute etiam recta agendo delinquimus, districtus iudex unde nobis fiat placabilis, non habemus".

[143] *Mor.* 24.11.32 (CCSL 143B:1211): "Quis enim considerare ualeat quanta mala per momenta temporum ipsis inconstantibus cogitationum motibus perpetramus?" Cf. Aug. *conf.* 4.14.22.

[144] *Mor.* 24.11.32 (CCSL 143B:1212).

The only solution for such unlimited liability is supererogatory *paenitentia* ("penitence" or repentance of sin"). Penitence must be lavish enough to atone for everything—penitence even if one is just.[145] Penitence becomes the cornerstone of Christian life. As compunction, a piercing feeling, penitence is the means of re-connecting with God after sin, since fear of punishment, when exhausted, leads to contemplative love.[146] Penitence should be continuous, a memory of sin, repentance of sin, and a fear of judgement so profound it becomes an internal disposition, which it is, in humility. Penitence is the critical turning point in Providence's plan. "Heavenly medicine" abounds for us, because God both "gave man commandments so he should not sin, but nevertheless gave the sinner a remedy that he should not despair".[147] Having this hopeful remedy in our own hands should inspire us to act. Gregory's "how-to" descriptions of repentance can only be sketched briefly here. Threads of imagery—legal, medical, and biblical—are interwoven and, at times, mismatched.

Penitence is inseparable from the rigorous self-examination of *discretio.* Legally, sin is a debt; penitence punishes the sinner to settle accounts with God, preventing punishment in the afterlife.[148] The Sinner replicates the procedures of a criminal court, "conscience accuses, reason judges, fear binds him fast, and pain tortures him".[149] *Discretio* investigates the guilty conscience, reckons the evidence, and judges the accused.[150] Convicted, the sinner allies himself with God to punish the guilty.[151] In a "contest" against himself, he "hates himself as he remembers himself to have been; and through the very one he presently is, he persecutes what he was in the past".[152] Now, "in the secret chamber of inward judgement, constrained by the sentence of their own conscience, they chasten in penitence what they committed in pride".[153] This inner struggle brings forth peace with God.

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[145] *HEv.* 2.34.5 (CCSL 141:303).

[146] See n. 169 below.

[147] *HEv.* 2.25.9 (CCSL 141:215): "Vbique ergo nobis occurrit superna medicina, quia et dedit homini praecepta ne peccet, et tamen peccanti dedit remedia ne desperet".

[148] *Mor.* 4.15.27 (CCSL 143:181).

[149] *Mor.* 25.7.13 (CCSL 143B:1238): "Nam conscientia accusat, ratio iudicat, timor ligat, dolor excruciat".

[150] *Mor.* 3.13.24 (CCSL 143:129–30); *Mor.* 33.35.60 (CCSL 143B:1725–26), cf. Cass. *conl.* 1.20; *Mor.* 9.25.39 (CCSL 143:483); *Mor.* 5.37.67 (CCSL 143:267).

[151] *Mor.* 32.5.4: "In uindicta enim sua deo se socians, sese contra se erigit".

[152] *Mor.* 25.7.13 (CCSL 143B:1238): "odit se qualem fuisse se meminit, et ipse qui est, per semetipsum insequitur illum qui fuit, atque ab ipso homine aduersus semetipsum fit quaedam rixa in animo, parturiens pacem cum deo".

[153] *Mor.* 25.7.13 (CCSL 143B:1238): "atque in hoc secreto interioris iudicii ipsa mentis suae exsecutione constricti, paenitendo feriunt quod superbiendo commiserunt".

Penitence is also a medicine that cures the soul by cleansing and removing the sickness of sin. The "wound" of sin is cured by the "wound" of penitence, a remedy of likeness. Pain makes it effective as a punishment and a cure.[154] Humoral theories flow beneath the surface. Gregory likens penitential tears to the soul's blood.[155] In Job 2:8, Job scrapes the humours oozing from his wounds with a potsherd, meaning that thoughts of judgement should rid us of the rottenness of all pleasure.[156] Just as beatings to the belly cleanse evil (cf. Prov 20:30), compunction wounds the mind, cleansing it of pride.[157] Both are relieved of humours. Similarly, the sharp severity of penitence chastens and cleanses every appetite, dissolute thought, and wound of pleasure.[158] Now humours flow as tears to scrub away the marks sin leaves on the soul, the stains (*macula*) of sin.[159]

Penitence has a sacramental aura, an aid to its ritualization. As a sacrifice, a sin-offering, it pays debts and removes guilt, and by atoning for sins in this life, it averts God's anger in the future.[160] As a second baptism, penitence replicates the original conversion from unbelief as a conversion from sin to righteousness. A second immolation of one's sinful identity, penitence washes away sins committed since the first baptism.[161] This baptism of tears cleanses the conscience,[162] and restores the robe of innocence.[163] As rebirth, regeneration, and resurrection, penitence revives those dead in sin, just as Lazarus arose from the tomb.[164]

Penitence accounts for spiritual progress, conveying the soul from the compunction of fear to that of love. First sinners cry, fearing punishment,

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[154] *Paenitentia, Mor.* 33.12.23 (CCSL 143B:1693–94); *Mor.* 3.22.43 (CCSL 143:142–43); *HEz.* 1.10.28 (CCSL 142:157); *Mor.* 23.21.40 (CCSL 143B:1174–75); *confessio, Mor.* 8.21.37 (CCSL 143:408); *Mor.* 7.4.5 (CCSL 143:337).

[155] *HEv.* 1.20.13 (CCSL 141:165).

[156] *Mor.* 3.30.58 (CCSL 143:151).

[157] *Mor.* 23.21.40 (CCSL 143B:1174–75).

[158] Cf. *Mor.* 3.29.57 (CCSL 143:150–51).

[159] *HEz.* 2.2.1 (CCSL 142:225); *Mor.* 31.27.54 (CCSL 143B:1589); *Mor.* 6.25.42 (CCSL 143:315); *Mor.* 8.24.41 (CCSL 143:412); *Mor.* 27.2.4 (CCSL 143B:1332–33).

[160] *HEz.* 2.8.19 (CCSL 142:350–51); *Mor.* 8.20.36 (CCSL 143:407); *Mor.* 24.24.51 (CCSL 143B:1226); *Mor.* 2.14.23 (CCSL 143:74); *Mor.* 4.15.27 (CCSL 143:181), *Mor.* 4.25.46 (CCSL 143:191–92); *Mor.* 33.12.23 (CCSL 143B:1693–94); *Mor.* 4.19.36 (CCSL 143:186); *Mor.* 25.6.8 (CCSL 143B:1234–35); *Mor.* 8.20.36 (CCSL 143:407–8).

[161] E.g. *HEv.* 1.10.7 (CCSL 141:79); *Mor.* 30.19.64 (CCSL 143B:1534–35).

[162] *HEv.* 1.10.7 (CCSL 141:72).

[163] *HEv.* 1.10.7 (CCSL 141:71 and 72): "Puniamus fletibus culpas.... baptizemus lacrimis conscientiam"; cf. *HEz.* 1.10.29 (CCSL 142:158); *Mor.* 12.6.9 (CCSL 143A:633–34): "uestis innocentiae".

[164] *Mor.* 27.18.38 (CCSL 143B:1359–60); *Mor.* 12.6.9 (CCSL 143A:633–34); *Mor.* 4.27.52 (CCSL 143:196–97); *Mor.* 22.10.21 (CCSL 143A:1108).

but then they cry more bitterly from love; longing for God, this misery is sweet.[165] These stages correlate with Old and New Dispensations.[166] A carnal compunction of fear is associated with the Old Testament, the death of the 'Old Man', sacrifices of the flesh, and sin-offerings.[167] The second compunction of love is associated with the New Testament, the rebirth of the 'New Man', whole-burnt offerings (holocausts) of the spirit, and vows to renounce the world in praise of God, the resurrection, and the kingdom to come.[168]

The perfection of this first stage of fear draws the soul to a second, higher compunction of love and contemplative union with God.[169] "When fear has been consumed by a prolonged anxiety and grief, then a certain security is born from the anticipation of forgiveness".[170] Compunction is the powerful 'engine' (*machina*)[171] drawing the soul forward, but it also runs in reverse. Penitence and contemplation are related dialectically, suggesting why progress reverses and repeats itself as it does. Fear and regret re-emerge because they were never entirely overcome. Penitence precedes contemplation; union with God depends on rejection of the sinful self: "he who does not know how to lament what weighs him down cannot produce what lifts him up",[172] and "the more he abases himself in self-contempt outwardly, the more he is uplifted by contemplation inwardly".[173] We are "lifted to heavenly joys through tears".[174] Regrettably, the joy of

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[165] *HEz.* 2.2.1 (CCSL 142:225); *HEz.* 2.4.3 (CCSL 142:259–60); *Cant.* 1.31 (CCSL 144:31); *Dial.* 3.34.2 (SC 260:400).

[166] For these two compunctions, see esp. *Dial.* 3.34.1–6 (SC260:400–404); *HEz.* 2.10.20–21 (CCSL 142:395–96); *Reg.* 7.23 (CCSL 140:475–76); *Cant.* 18 (CCSL 144: 19–21). Cf. Cass. *conl.* 1.17; 1.19; 2.11; 4.5; 4.19; 9.28–29; Cass. *inst.* 4.43.1; 12.15.1; 12.18.1; 12.27.5. For Augustine's influence, see Jean Doignon, " 'Blessure d'affliction' et 'blessure d'amour' (*Moralia* 6.25.42): une jonction de thèmes de la spiritualité patristique de Cyprien à Augustin," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Fontaine et al., pp. 297–303.

[167] *HEz.* 2.10.20–21 (CCSL 142:395–96); *Mor.* 32.3.4 (CCSL 143B, 1629). For compunction as fire, see esp. *Mor.* 3.30.59 (CCSL 143:152): *HEz.* 1.5.7–8 (CCSL 142:60); *HEv.* 2.30.6 (CCSL 141:283).

[168] *HEz.* 2.10.4 (CCSL 142:382).

[169] *Reg.* 7.23 (CCSL 140:475–76); "quam flebat prius, cum mala aeterna metuebat, sicque fit ut perfecta compunctio formidinis trahat animum compunctioni dilectionis".

[170] *Dial.* 3.34.2 (SC 260:400): "At uero cum longa moeroris anxietudine fuerit formido consumpta, quaedam iam de praesumptione ueniae securitas nascitur". *Reg.* 7.23 (CCSL 140:475).

[171] *Mor.* 1.34.48 (CCSL 143:50).

[172] *Mor.* 31.46.93 (CCSL 143B:1613–14): "qui nescit lugere quod grauat, non ualet proferre quod subleuat".

[173] *Mor.* 30.19.64 (CCSL 143B:1534–35): "sancti enim uiri quanto magis se exterius despiciendo deiciunt, tanto amplius interius reuelationum contemplatione pascuntur".

[174] *Mor.* 5.8.14 (CCSL 143:227): "ad superna gaudia flendo subleuatur".

contemplation is only half an hour (Rev 8:1). Unwelcome thoughts force themselves back into the mind, the flesh stirs, or the soul simply recoils, having discerned its distance from God's perfection.[175] This *reuerberatio* sends the soul back to earth again, fearful and repentant, trembling as if the Lord had "overturned the heavens" (cf. Job 11:10), or devastated, as if enemies had sneaked into a city.[176] But because Christians persevere, the cycle begins anew: penitence, contemplation, reverberation. Life is an endless alternation: we ascend and descend impelled by "the movement of alternating thoughts".[177] The thistle (*carduus*) of temptation may be trampled by a crowd of anxieties, but it returns when the grace of conversion removes those anxieties from the pathway of the heart.[178] Trial (*probatio*) follows as well as precedes conversion, a continuing contest (*certamen*) that ends only at death.[179]

On one hand, Christians have reason to hope as sinners have the power to cleanse sins. Christ's propitiation of God means that human actions can count, but it does not guarantee God's acceptance. Uncertainty haunts Gregory. Even the just man bows before God's omnipotence. "No one can resist [God's] power" or "check [his] punishments by the merits of his own virtue".[180] Again, the answer lies in the logical order of God's Providence. Citing Job 10:7 ("Since there is no man that can deliver out of your hand") Gregory explains the logic and rationality that would be manifest in God saving humanity. "What is left for you, except to spare, since no one can resist your power? ... so let your mercy spare him", Gregory imagines Job arguing.[181] It would be absurd otherwise. Surely, God would not unjustly (*inique*) spurn what he has mercifully (*benigne*) created; and he who made the world from nothing would never desert unjustly (*iniuste*) that which exists.[182] Such must be the order of Providence. Gregory's logic is impeccable. How could it not be true? But is it?

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[175] Cf. *Mor.* 30.16.53 (CCSL 143B:1527); cf. *HEz.* 2.2.14 (CCSL 142:234); *Mor.* 24.11.30 (CCSL 143B:1209–10).

[176] *Mor.* 10.10.16 (CCSL 143:549); *Mor.* 26.45.82 (CCSL 143B:1327–28).

[177] *Mor.* 9.19.29 (CCSL 143:478). "Motus itaque animi dum inter uota et uitia alternant, nimirum sibi certitudinem exauditionis obnubilant".

[178] *Mor.* 24.11.30 (CCSL 143B:1209–10).

[179] *Mor.* 24.11.32 (CCSL 143B:1211). The entire section 11:24–34 is relevant.

[180] *Mor.* 9.48.73 (CCSL 143:508): "nemo est qui animaduersionem tuam ex merito suae uirtutis retineat, eo a se facilius tua pietas exigat ut parcat."

[181] *Mor.* 9.48.73 (CCSL 143:508): "quid tibi restat nisi parcere, cuius uirtuti nullus ualet obuiare?"

[182] *Mor.* 26.20.35 (CCSL 143B:1292–93); see also *Mor.* 9.15.22 (CCSL 143:472) and *Mor.* 9.48.73 (CCSL 143:508): "quia sub iusto examine dignum non est tuae placationi quod feci, pensa misericorditer, ne pereat quod fecisti".

CHAPTER NINE

GREGORY'S MODEL OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION IN THE *LIBER REGULAE PASTORALIS*

George E. Demacopoulos

In keeping with the spirit of Brill's Companion Series, the following essay introduces the major themes and scholarly discussions related to Gregory the Great's approach to the "art" of spiritual direction, which is best represented in his *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* (*Book of Pastoral Rule*), which was the most copied and influential of his writings in the Middle Ages.[1] Following a cursory summary of the competing ideas about spiritual direction that circulated among Christian authors prior to Gregory's pontificate, this essay will examine the context, structure, and content of the *Pastoral Rule*. In doing so, I will argue that Gregory's vision of spiritual direction was a sophisticated synthesis of multiple (previously competing) traditions about pastoral care that he generally, although not always, attempted to put into action during his tenure as bishop of Rome. The essay concludes with a brief appraisal of the text's reception in later generations along with an analysis of the ways in which it inspired subsequent ideas about the relationship between leadership, responsibility and accountability, whether clerical or otherwise.

Pastoral Care in the Post-Constantinian World

With a few notable exceptions, both the criteria for spiritual authority and the exercise of spiritual leadership in the pre-Constantinian period were largely uniform from one Christian community to another, and are reflected in a few surviving texts, often known as "Church orders"—the

[1] Over 500 medieval manuscripts (an astonishing number) of the *Pastoral Rule* survive in libraries from Moscow to Madrid. This essay draws, in part, from several previous publications concerning Gregory's approach to spiritual direction in general and his *Pastoral Rule* in particular. Most notably, see George Demacopoulos, *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (Notre Dame, 2007), pp. 127–64; idem, "Introduction" in *St. Gregory the Great: The Book of Pastoral Rule with Introduction and Translation*, Popular Patristic Texts Series (Crestwood, NY, 2007), pp. 9–25.

Didascalia apostolorum offering, perhaps, the best example.[2] These texts located authority in the person of the bishop and prescribed specific requirements for episcopal election. They also identified several episcopal responsibilities, both administrative and pastoral. The legalization of Christianity in the early 4th century, however, led to a widening of the difference between what we might distinguish as lay versus ascetic (eventually monastic) communities. The divergence in Christian practice, in turn, led to the development of distinctive patterns of spiritual guidance designed to accommodate those practices—this was true both in terms of the qualities that were understood to be necessary for spiritual leadership and in terms of the actual techniques of spiritual supervision that leaders employed for the benefit of those in their care.[3]

Thus, we can observe that by the middle of the 4th century that the patterns of spiritual direction began to coalesce around the bifurcated pastoral needs of the "parish" and the monastery. The first focused on the lay community, was directed by an ordained clergy, and emphasized doctrinal instruction, the distribution of charity, and the performance of the sacraments. The second developed in a monastic setting, taking a more personal and interactive approach through a spiritual father/spiritual disciple model of apprenticeship that was, in many ways, modeled upon Greco-Roman traditions of philosophical discipleship and training.[4] But the 4th century was a period of tremendous change for the Christian world and by the end of the century, the divide between monastic and lay patterns of spiritual direction had become integrated in new ways as professed ascetics began to rise to positions of episcopal authority.

It was precisely during this period of change and uncertainty that a new genre of Christian literature—the pastoral treatise—emerged to navigate the uneven waters of post-Constantinian spiritual direction. Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose of Milan, and John Chrysostom authored substantial treatises on the goals and techniques of spiritual direction. Their texts define who should and who should not receive ordination, they identify the director's practical responsibilities, and they anticipate many of the

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[2] See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, pp. 4–9 and Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, 2005). The exceptions, of course, would stem from those communities that did not recognize the authority of the episcopate.

[3] See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, pp. 3–16.

[4] For more on the idea of philosophy as a way of life, see the work of Pierre Hadot, especially a collection of his essays, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford, 1995).

pastoral challenges of leadership. Although there is a great deal of slippage between the terms used for the leader in these texts (i.e. it was not always explicit whether the director was a bishop, priest, or even a monastic director who was not a member of the clergy), each of their authors fit the model of an ascetic-bishop, and each sought to resolve the tension between their ascetic idealism and the realities of pastoral ministry.[5] It is quite likely, in fact, that the genre of pastoral literature was born from a desire to reconcile that tension.

Unlike previous reflections about pastoral responsibility, the pastoral treatise provided its authors with the opportunity to explore in detail both the criteria for authority and the techniques of spiritual leadership. In his *On the Priesthood,* for example, John Chrysostom identified ascetic experience as a prerequisite for leadership, but he also asserted that a successful ministry was not guaranteed by monastic training alone. Likewise, Gregory Nazianzen expressed his deepest uncertainties about his ability to balance care for his flock with his own private meditation.[6]

It is with these 4th-century treatises that we find the earliest attempts to combine the pastoral strategies of the monastic and lay communities. Ambrose, for example, understood the priest's duties to include doctrinal instruction, the celebration of the sacraments, and the supervision of female ascetics. He also identified the need to mentor inexperienced clerics. Referring to the ideal relationship of Joshua and Moses, Ambrose affirmed that spiritual authority could be transferred from a spiritual leader to his disciple.[7] Though not fully developed, Ambrose's description of the experienced adviser is similar to the spiritual father/spiritual disciple pattern of direction that was developing in the ascetic communities of Egypt and elsewhere.

The bridge between the ascetic and lay patterns is even more explicit in Gregory Nazianzen's second oration, often known as *On his Flight to Pontus.* Here, he concluded that the ideal candidate for the priesthood was a man who had the benefits of wealth and education (in antiquity, only the wealthy received an education) but who had abandoned the pleasures of the aristocratic life and adopted the life of abstemiousness

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[5] For more on the emergence of the monk-bishop or ascetic-bishop in an Eastern Christian context, see Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2004).

[6] For more on Nazianzen's ideas, see Demacopoulos, *Five Models,* pp. 51–81.

[7] Ambrose, *On the Offices* 1.43, 2.20; ed. Maurice Testard, *De officiis,* CCSL 15 (Turnholt, 1957), pp. 78–79, and 132–34.

and contemplation (i.e. the life of the monk).[8] Nazianzen went on to describe the priest's responsibilities as a combination of the active life of pastoral administration and the prayerful life of the remote ascetic. It was Nazianzen who first proposed a combination of action and contemplation, and this grouping became the model for priestly service for the Byzantine Church.

Although he did not author a pastoral treatise in the mould of Nazianzen or Ambrose, John Cassian perhaps did as much as anyone to spread the pastoral strategies of Eastern ascetic communities to the Latin West and his corpus testifies to the continued development of an ascetic pastoral tradition well into the 5th century. Two of Cassian's surviving treatises (*Conferences* and *Institutes*) offer detailed (if idealized) accounts of Eastern Christian ascetic practice and the techniques by which spiritual authorities would impart instruction to their disciples. The heroes of Cassian's texts were not bishops or even priests but holy ascetics who possessed a range of spiritual gifts, the most important being discernment (*discretio*).[9] Drawing from a tradition popularized in the literature of the Egyptian desert, Cassian described spiritual discernment as a mystical quality that enabled an elder to know the difference between an angel and demon or to acquire spiritual enlightenment for his own sake. In the context of spiritual direction, however, spiritual discernment was the key supernatural gift that enabled an elder to offer effective guidance to those in his care. Thus, for Cassian, it functioned as a pastoral, if mystical, quality that was bestowed by God upon all those who legitimately exercised a position of authority over disciples. And, in a key move that very much set the stage for Gregory the Great, Cassian held that it was the responsibility of these experienced monks to suspend their own spiritual enlightenment for the sake of instructing novice disciples.[10]

Although Cassian's texts reflect a monastic milieu and very much idealize a specific form of monastic training, it is important to note that many of the original recipients of his texts were bishops, eventual bishops, or the abbots of the most prestigious monastic communities in Gaul that, in time, provided candidates for the episcopate throughout the Gallic Church during the 5th and 6th centuries.[11] Eventually, the increasing number of

[8] See George Demacopoulos, "Leadership in the Post-Constantinian Church According to Gregory Nazianzen", *Louvain Studies* 30 (2005), 223–39.

[9] See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, pp. 111–14.

[10] See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, pp. 121–23.

[11] See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, pp. 108–09.

monks who entered the episcopate in Gaul and elsewhere forced a sea-change in the practice of spiritual direction in the lay Church, because, again in time, pastoral care in the broader Church became more ascetic. Many of the tenets of the lay model persisted (e.g. the authority of the clergy, the emphasis on preaching, and a concern for administrative competence), but even those considerations evolved to reflect ascetic ideals. As we will see, Gregory the Great understood pastoral authority to belong to the clergy but suggested that ascetic experience was the most important criterion for a priestly ministry.

As other essays in this volume have well demonstrated, Gregory came to St. Peter's chair with a background that perfectly fit the kind of experience and training that Gregory Nazianzen had identified two centuries earlier as being the primary criteria for spiritual authority. Not only did Pope Gregory have the benefit of education and good breeding, but he had committed years of his life to ascetic discipline and spiritual contemplation. Added to those qualities, of course, Gregory also boasted a wealth of experience in public administration and estate management. As we will see, Pope Gregory appropriated and expanded upon Gregory Nazianzen's thesis that the ideal spiritual leader was the one who, possessing the appropriate qualities, learned to balance his own life of contemplation with the active life of service.

The Context and Audience of Gregory's Pastoral Rule

Soon after his election in September of 590, Gregory sent a copy of the *Pastoral Rule* to John, archbishop of Ravenna. A few years later, he sent a copy to a friend he had met in Constantinople, Leander, then bishop of Seville.[12] In the original letter to John, which accompanied the treatise, Gregory hints that he had opposed his own election to the episcopate on the grounds that he was unworthy of office.[13] He has authored the *Pastoral Rule*, he tells John, so that those who are unprepared and inexperienced might learn what is expected of their conduct and activity. Most of all, Gregory writes, the inexperienced and ambitious must learn of the weight of responsibility that accompanies spiritual leadership and, in turn, must realize the extent to which their own salvation has been put in jeopardy by assuming pastoral care. In some sense, we might say that

[12] Gregory, *Reg.* 5.53 (CCSL 140:348).
[13] Gregory, *RP*, prol. (SC 381:124–26).

Gregory authored the *Pastoral Rule* as a kind of rhetorical justification for his own election.

By the late 6th century, it had become commonplace for Christian leaders to protest their worthiness and to assert, if only formulaically, that they did not desire a position of leadership. Gregory of Tours records a sympathetic and legendary account in which he says that Pope Gregory desired to avoid election so strongly that he had hidden himself outside of Rome.[14] The *topos* of the leader who shuns leadership, of course, has both Christian and Greco-Roman precedents. On the Christian side, the refusal to pursue the prestige or dignity of leadership corresponded with the Christian virtue of humility and became a hallmark of Christian writing by the 4th century; on the Greco-Roman side, the tradition went back to Plato, whose premise of the philosopher king asserted that no one who desired authority could be trusted with authority—only the one who had no interest in leadership could be trusted with the power of leadership because only that person would govern for the good rather than govern with self-interest.

As formulaic as Gregory's protestations may have been, his uneasiness with the responsibility of office in the opening years of his pontificate appears genuine, even if his rhetoric of humility may also have provided Gregory with certain political advantages.[15] Writing to his former associates in Constantinople, he likened the Church of Rome to an "old and leaky ship" cast about by the waves of the world.[16] Having been placed at the helm of this ship, he has been "made a slave to worldly cares while wearing the disguise of a bishop."[17] And he considers his life "ruined" by the responsibility of public service.[18] Upon learning that one of his episcopal friends had supported his election, he lamented that the burden his friend has placed upon him was too great to bear, that it was breaking his back, and that it would be only a matter of time before he would be "cast to the depths of this great tempest."[19] The ship of the world, it would

[14] Gregory of Tours, *HF* 10.1 (MGH SSRM 1,1,2, p. 481).

[15] On the significance of the rhetoric of humility as exercise and defense of authority, see Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000).

[16] *Reg.* 1.4 (CCSL 140:4): "Sed quia uetustam nauim uehementurque confractam indignus ego infirmusque suscepi, undique enim fluctus intrant et cotidiana ac ualida tempestate quassatae putridae naufragium tabulae sonant..."

[17] *Reg.* 1.5 (CCSL 140:5): "Miror autem quod in me collatas dudum contenentias uestras ex hac moderna pastoralis officii continentia distraxistis, in qua sub colore episcopatus ad saeculum sum reductus, in qua tantis terrae curis inseruio..."

[18] *Reg.* 1.6 (CCSL 140:7).

[19] *Reg.* 1.7 (CCSL 140:9): "Multis enim causarum fluctibus quatior et tumultuosae uitae tempestatibus affligor, ita ut recte dicam: *Veni in altitudinem maris et tempestas demersit me* (Ps. 68:3)."

seem, was falling apart, and, as some kind of cosmic joke, God was requiring Gregory to be the last one to man the rudder.[20]

Although Gregory first distributed the book to a fellow bishop (and one well-placed at that), there is little reason to hold, as scholars once did, that he envisioned the audience of the *Pastoral Rule* to be restricted to the episcopate. On this count, Gregory's terminology for the spiritual director is particularly relevant. He employs a variety of terms to refer to the practitioner of spiritual leadership, such as *sacerdos, rector, praedicator,* and *pastor.*[21] Intriguingly, *episcopus* is not one of them. Nevertheless, several 20th-century commentators presumed that Gregory was writing solely about the episcopate.[22] Such a position not only fails to account for the pontiff's terminology, it under-appreciates the extent to which Gregory advanced the very same ideas about spiritual leadership in other treatises and letters that were intended primarily for ascetic audiences. This is particularly true of the *Moralia,* which in many ways is an extended excursus on the qualities and techniques of spiritual leadership and which was first delivered to Gregory's monastic community in Constantinople. Among other things, Gregory first developed the long list of personality traits set in opposition to one another, which is the subject of Part III of the *Pastoral Rule,* during his preparation of the *Moralia.*[23]

The Structure and Argument of the Pastoral Rule

The *Pastoral Rule* is comprised of four books and runs to about 180 pages in modern translations.[24] Part I emphasizes who should and who should not take on the responsibility of spiritual leadership. Part II describes many of the *pastor*'s responsibilities and the need for the *pastor* to retain

[20] Peter Iver Kaufman, *Church, Book, and Bishop. Conflict and Authority in Early Latin Christianity* (Boulder, CO, 1996), pp. 120–21.

[21] *Sacerdos* is used 19 times, *rector* 43 times, *praedicator* 21 times, and *pastor* 19 times.

[22] See, especially, Wilhelm Gessel, "Reform am Haupt: Die Pastoralregel Gregors des Grossen und die Bestzung von Bischofsstühlen," in *Papsttum und Kirchenreform: Historische Beiträge. Festchrift für Georg Schwaiger zum 65. Geburtstag,* eds Manfred Weitlauff and Karl Hausberger (St Ottilien, 1990), pp. 17–36. See also Robert Markus, "Gregory the Great's 'rector' and his Genesis," in *Grégoire le grand,* eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 137–45.

[23] In general, it is impossible to know what elements of the *Moralia* were original to Constantinople and what was added through the editorial process after Gregory had become pope.

[24] In addition to my own translation of the text, published in St. Vladimir's Popular Patristic Texts Series, see Henry Davis (trans.), *Pastoral Care,* Ancient Christian Writers 12 (Westminister, 1959).

humility in light of his position of privilege. Part III, the longest section and most original aspect of the text, introduces 36 pairs of personality traits set in opposition to one another (e.g. old and young, rich and poor, male and female); for each pairing, Gregory prescribes a regimen to advance the individual's spiritual standing and to help them overcome any challenges that might accompany these conditions. The final section, the shortest in the book, offers a final exhortation toward humility, and it also reminds the reader that the spiritual director will need to balance a host of considerations when speaking in public or private consultation. While speaking in public, the *pastor* will need to realize that his audience will consist of persons requiring very different things; whereas when he speaks privately the *pastor* will need to understand that each individual is a microcosm of the whole because each individual possesses competing traits and needs that must be balanced against one another. In short, the spiritual director must employ discernment in everything he does and in everything he says.

At the outset of Part I, Gregory notes that "no one presumes to teach an art that he has not first mastered through study. How foolish it is therefore for the inexperienced to assume pastoral authority when the care of souls is the art of arts."[25] Perhaps what is most significant as we consider Gregory's approach is that the criteria he reckons to qualify as "experience" are all filtered through an ascetic register. In other words, the spiritual director was above all other things an experienced ascetic. We see this throughout the text, but especially in Part I where both the statements about who is qualified and the statements about who is not qualified reflect ascetic ideals. One of his longer inventories proclaims:[26]

> Therefore, [the *pastor*] should be an example of good living, someone who is already dead to the passions and therefore living a spiritual life, who disregards worldly prosperity, who does not fear adversity, who seeks the interior life only; someone who has a healthy balance between a body that is not

[25] *RP* 1.1 (SC 381:127): "Nulla ars doceri praesumitur, nisi intenta prius meditatione discatur. Ab imperitis ergo pastorale magisterium qua temeritate suscipitur, quando ars est artium regimen animarum." All translations of the *RP* are taken from Demacopoulos (trans.), *St. Gregory the Great: The Book of Pastoral Rule* (Crestwood, NY, 2008). The phrase "art of arts" is a deferential acknowledgement of Gregory Nazianzen's *Oration* 2.

[26] *RP* 1.10 (SC 381:160–62). "Ille igitur, ille modis omnibus debet ad exemplum uiuendi pertrahi, qui cunctis carnis passionibus moriens iam spiritaliter uiuit, qui prospera mundi postposuit, qui nulla aduersa pertimescit, qui sola interna desiderat. Cuius intentioni bene congruens, nec omnino per imbecillitatem corpus, nec ualde per contumeliam repugnat spiritus. Qui ad aliena cupienda non ducitur, sed propria largitur. Qui per pietatis uiscera citius ad ignoscendum flectitur, sed numquam plus quam deceat ignoscens..."

> always weak nor a spirit opposed by discord; someone who does not covet the possessions of others but gives freely of his own; someone who through compassion is quickly moved to pardon, yet never pardons excessively.

Many of these attributes, of course, convey ascetic ideals as reflected in the works of Cassian, Benedict, or the writings of the Christian East. Note, for example, the use of the language of renunciation in contrasting terms such as "passions" versus "spiritual living", or "body" versus "spirit", in his description of the consummate leader.

In a similar vein, Gregory acknowledges the obstacles that will prevent one from offering legitimate and effective leadership. For example, he extols the importance of intercession by excluding from office those who lack the capacity to engage in it:[27]

> How can anyone seize upon the post of intercession with God for the people, who does not know himself to be in his grace through the merit of his own life? And how can he ask for pardon for others while not knowing whether he is himself reconciled to God?

Additional shortcomings further prohibit one from spiritual leadership, including pride, vainglory, greed, lust, and pursuit of prestige.[28] In short, it is precisely those vices that had been identified in previous generations by ascetic authors that pose for Gregory the greatest obstacles to spiritual leadership.

Illuminating is Gregory's turn to Leviticus 21.17–18 (a list of physical impediments to the Jewish priesthood). Utilizing a hermeneutic of ascetic

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[27] *RP* 1.10 (SC 381:162). "Si ergo homo apud hominem de quo minime praesumit fieri intercessor erubescit, qua mente apud Deum intercessionis locum pro populo arripit, qui familiarem se eius gratiae esse per uitae meritum nescit? Aut ab eo quomodo aliis ueniam postulat, qui utrum sibi sit placatus ignorat?"

[28] *RP* 1.11 (SC 381:166–72). See, for example, on pride: "Albuginem uero habet in oculo, qui ueritatis lucem uidere non sinitur, quia arrogantia sapientiae seu iustitiae caecatur.... Si autem candorem sibi iustitiae seu sapientiae tribuit, a luce se supernae cognitionis excludit; et eo claritatem ueri luminis nequaquam penetrat, quo se apud se per arrogantiam exaltat" (SC 381:168–70). On vainglory: "Sed sunt nonnulli qui dum aestimari hebetes nolunt, saepe se in quibusdam inquisitionibus plus quam necesse est exercentes, ex nimia subtilitate falluntur" (SC 381:166). On greed: "Impetiginem quoque habet in corpore, quisquis auaritia uastatur in mente, quae si in paruis non compescitur, nimirum sine mensura dilatatur.... Sed decor membrorum perditur, quia aliarum quoque uirtutum per hanc pulchritudo deprauatur; et quasi totum corpus exasperat, quia per uniuersa uitia animum suplantat" (SC 381:170). On lust: "Lippus uero est, cuius quidem ingenium ad cognitionem ueritatis emicat, sed tamen hoc carnalia opera obscurant.... Et sunt nonnulli quorum sensum carnalis uitae operatio sauciat, qui uidere recta subtiliter per ingenium poterant, sed usu prauorum actuum caligant. Lippus itaque est, cuius sensum natura exacuit; sed conversationis prauitas confundit" (SC 381:168).

purity, Gregory restricts the Christian priesthood to experienced ascetics. For example, he compares a blind man to "one who is ignorant of the light of celestial contemplation."[29] Thus a blind man is allegorized to be unfit for spiritual leadership because he is "oppressed by the darkness of the present life... and does not see where to go himself."[30] A second example, a small nose, symbolizes a person who lacks spiritual discernment, *discretio*: "Just as the nose discerns the difference between a sweet smell and stench, [a successful *pastor*] applies discernment to distinguish between sin and virtue."[31] Indeed, Gregory insists that the two most important criteria for spiritual authority are the possession of *discretio* and *contemplatio*. By the 6th century, the two had long been synonymous with the ascetic endeavour.[32]

Part of Gregory's challenge, however, was that he faced resistance to his model on two fronts. In Rome, the clerical establishment was opposed to Gregory's ascetic-minded reforms—Gregory, of course, was the first monk to become pope. But the pontiff also struggled to convince ascetics that they should abandon the monastery and enter the service of the Church more broadly. To address the latter concern, Gregory established two important precedents: (1) he used the *Pastoral Rule* as a means to recruit ascetics to office and, (2) he recalibrated the lay/ascetic binary according to a three-tiered hierarchy in which the spiritual director or priest was superior to both the lay person and the individual ascetic.

Concerning the former, we find Gregory using the *Pastoral Rule* to rebuke those qualified ascetics who resist the role of supervision. Affirming their qualifications, he notes:[33]

> [F]or there are several who possess incredible virtues and who are exalted by great talents for training others; men who are spotless in the pursuit of chastity, stout in the vigour of fasting, satiated in the feasts of doctrine, humble in the longsuffering of patience, erect in the fortitude of authority, tender in the grace of kindness, and strict in the severity of judgment.

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[29] *RP* 1.11 (SC 381:164): "Caecus quippe est, qui supernae contemplationis lumen ignorat..."

[30] *RP* 1.11 (SC 381:164): "... qui praesentis uitae tenebris pressus,... quo gressus operis porrigat nescit."

[31] *RP* 1.11 (SC 381:166): "Naso quippe odores foetoresque discernimus. Recte ergo per nasum discretio exprimitur, per quam uirtutes eligimus, delicta reprobamus."

[32] See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, p. 132.

[33] *RP* 1.5 (SC 381:144): "Nam sunt nonnulli, qui eximia uirtutum dona percipiunt, et pro excitatione ceterorum magnis muneribus exaltantur, qui studio castitatis mundi, abstinentiae robore ualidi, doctrinae dapibus referti, patientiae longanimitate humiles, auctoritatis fortitudine erecti, pietatis gratia benigni, iustitiae seueritate destricti sunt."

And, yet, these men refuse to accept responsibility for others:[34]

> If they refuse to accept a position of spiritual leadership when they are called, they forfeit the majority of their gifts—gifts that they have received not for themselves only but also for others. When these men contemplate their own spiritual advantages and do not consider anyone else, they lose these goods because they desire to keep them for themselves.

By using the *Pastoral Rule* to recruit would-be priests into active ministry, Gregory effectively broke with the tradition of Ambrose, Nazianzen, and John Chrysostom who had used their own pastoral treatises to discourage ordination.[35]

But Gregory's position was more than a simple request that ascetics accept responsibility—his entire ascetic theology was one in which he placed the summit of spiritual and ascetic achievement in the very act of humbling oneself for the service of others. This, more than anything else, differentiates Gregory's ascetic theology from that of his predecessors, whether John Cassian (whose writings Gregory knew well) or others. For Cassian and the ascetic writers of the Christian East, the summit of the ascetic life was described as a mystical encounter with God, which was brought on by virtue and stillness. For Gregory, however, the summit was achieved only by the ascetic who had experienced that encounter but willingly suspended it for the service of others. In other words, for Gregory, the apex of the spiritual life was to be found in personal sacrifice offered for others. Obviously, that position sits well within a pastoral framework and helps to explain the mutual dependency between Gregory's ascetic theology and his pastoral theology.[36]

Given Gregory's explicit desire to restrict spiritual leadership to those with sufficient ascetic credentials, it should not surprise us that Gregory also described spiritual supervision in ways that corresponded to the spiritual father/spiritual disciple model of mentorship that grew out of the ascetic tradition. Like Gregory Nazianzen, Pope Gregory understood successful pastoral leadership to require both renunciation and service. As a

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[34] Ibid. "Qui nimirum culmen regiminum si uocati suscipere rennuunt, ipsa sibi plerumque dona adimunt, quae non pro se tantummodo, sed etiam pro aliis acceperunt. Cumque sua et non aliorum lucra cogitant, ipsis se, quae priuata habere appetunt, bonis priuant."

[35] See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, p. 133.

[36] The relationship between Gregory's ascetic theology and his pastoral theology is particularly well expressed in his *Dialogues* and will be one of the primary subjects of my forthcoming monograph on Gregory's theology.

consequence, his ideal spiritual director was one who could balance the *contemplatio* of the isolated ascetic and the *actio* of the well-trained public administrator. Gregory's "active contemplative" was not only a more effective leader but even a better Christian than either the recluse or the administrator. Indeed, in Part II of the *Pastoral Rule*, Gregory describes a healthy tension between the desires for action and contemplation as an actual source for spiritual well-being. The director who desires one and not the other is unbalanced and, therefore, cannot adequately lead others to God.[37]

But Gregory's model for direction incorporated the spiritual father/spiritual disciple tradition in other ways as well. Perhaps most importantly, he incorporated the idea that a true spiritual director could discern the unique needs of individual disciples and then set them on a path to spiritual well-being through a combination of ritualized and introspective techniques. Speaking of the responsibility of the spiritual advisor to investigate the individual needs of his disciples, Gregory writes:[38]

> [Certain vices], however, lie hidden and require keen investigation so that their symptoms may be brought to light. The *rector* must know these great vices by their small signs, and he must investigate the hidden thoughts of his subordinates and then intervene with the proper rebuke before it is too late.

Through discernment, the *rector* distinguishes between virtue and vice that is disguised as virtue.[39] Drawing from Cassian, Benedict, and others, Gregory recommends that the spiritual director set a path for recovery according to the specific situation and strength of the disciple. And, when needed, the remedy should allow for a certain degree of flexibility in order that the long-term benefit can be maximized.

By applying the concept of *condescensio*, the *rector* or *pastor* is instructed to tolerate certain sins while rooting out a more serious malady. Then,

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[37] *RP* 2.7 (SC 381:218–30).

[38] *RP* 2.10 (SC 381:240): "Nonnulla autem sunt subtiliter occulta perscrutanda, ut quibusdam signis erumpentibus, rector in subditorum mente omne quod clausum latet, inueniat, et interueniente correptionis articulo, ex minimis maiora cognoscat."

[39] *RP* 2.9 (SC 382:236): "Scire etiam rector debet quod plerumque uitia uirtutes se esse mentiuntur. Nam saepe sub parsimoniae nomine se tenacia palliat, contraque se effusio sub appellatione largitatis occultat. Saepe inordinata remissio pietas creditur, et effrenata ira spiritalis zeli uirtus aestimatur." "The *rector* ought to know that there are many vices that appear as virtues. For example, greed disguises itself as frugality, and wastefulness is ascribed to generosity. Often laziness is accounted loving kindness and wrath appears to be spiritual zeal."

later, he should return to other spiritual illnesses and treat them as well: "When the preacher does this, he does not aggravate the overall illness but rescues the life of the one infected, thus enabling him to find a more fitting time to administer the [spiritual] medicine for the lesser fault as well."[40] The comparisons to medical physicians and treatment are frequent and offer Gregory a large body of practical examples.

In order to facilitate this process as much as possible, Gregory dedicates the longest section in the treatise, Part III, to an exhaustive list of personality profiles set in opposition to one another. He distinguishes between men and women, rich and poor, young and old, among others, indicating the spiritual advantages and disadvantages of every condition. Nazianzen had suggested something similar in his *Oration* 2, but Pope Gregory's discussion displays a much richer and more exhaustive analysis. He notes that even honorable traits like patience or generosity are not without their own pitfalls—for example, is a patient man truly patient or does he harbour resentment? Moreover, Pope Gregory notes that there are significant differences within the same condition that are not immediately obvious—such as whether chastity is lifelong or recent, or whether a person who does not commit good works is unwilling to try them or unable to complete them. In short, the pontiff attempts to bring a degree of spiritual supervision to the lay Church that had previously existed only in the spiritual father/spiritual disciple setting of the monastic world. As a consequence, he established an ideal for pastoral supervision that had heretofore never been pursued in the wider Church.

Putting Theory into Practice

As other essays in this volume have demonstrated, Gregory's corpus is one of the largest from the ancient world to survive to the present day—his correspondence, especially, is unprecedented in its size. As a consequence, we have a great deal of material by which we can assess the extent to which Gregory put the strategies of the *Pastoral Rule* into practice. While this essay is not the proper setting to explore all of Gregory's pastoral initiatives in his fourteen-year tenure as bishop, we will examine two relevant arenas in which Gregory pursued policies that were consistent

[40] *RP* 3.38 (SC 382:526): "Quod cum agit, non morbum exaggerat, sed uulnerati sui, cui medicamentum adhibet, uitam seruat, ut exquirendae salutis congruum tempus inueniat."

with ideas and ideals expressed in the *Pastoral Rule*: (1) his promotion of ascetics to positions of authority, and (2) his willingness to take a gradual and flexible approach to spiritual growth.

At the conclusion of most papal biographies in the *Liber Pontificalis* there is an indication of how many clerics were raised to the episcopate or priesthood during the tenure of a particular pontiff. In most cases, we know very little about who these men were, which sees they governed, or why they were selected. By comparison, through Gregory's correspondence, we know a great deal about the bishops that were elected in Italy, Sicily, and the Balkans during Gregory's tenure, and we also know why Gregory either supported them or opposed them. Indeed, Gregory was very active in his promotion of certain candidates in regions traditionally beyond the reach of Roman jurisdiction. For Gregory's 9th-century biographers, his promotion of various ascetic-minded and "Roman" candidates was an important testimony to the pontiff's ability to govern and regulate the Church in a way that corresponded to the specific concerns of 9th-century papal ideology.[41] Many of Gregory's appointees, in fact, were identified by John and/or Paul the deacon as having been members of Gregory's monastery in Rome. Several of Gregory's 20th-century biographers simply took these 9th-century testimonies as fact and presumed that there was an effective "Gregorianization" of the Italian and, especially, the Sicilian episcopate during his tenure.[42] While it is very difficult to demonstrate with any certainty that the majority of these candidates were "Roman," it is far easier to show that Gregory cared a great deal about the ascetic credentials of potential bishops.[43] This is true both in those cases where he backed specific individuals that he knew personally and in those cases where he was simply offering Roman approval of a local deliberation.

For example, in 595, Gregory intervened in the election of the archbishop of Ravenna. The imperial exarch at Ravenna, a man at odds with Gregory on so many matters, had backed Donatus. Gregory, in turn, backed and ultimately ensured the election of Marinianus who had been a protégé of Gregory's in Rome. Indeed, in his narration of the election after the fact, Gregory boasted that Marinianus was "our venerable brother... who

[41] John the Deacon, *Sancti Gregorii papae vita* (PL 75:63–242).

[42] See, especially, Jeffrey Richards, *Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1979), p. 352. See also John Martyn's notes sprinkled throughout his translation of Gregory's letters (3 vols).

[43] See George Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter. Apostolic Discourse and Papal Authority in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2013), pp. 134–62.

was with [me] for a long time in the monastery."[44] Although Marinianus had himself refused the election, Gregory was able to "persuade" him and proclaimed his total confidence that Marinianus would be able to simultaneously "maintain the internal life" and "administer his external responsibilities."[45]

It was one thing for Gregory to interfere in the see of Ravenna—Marinianus' predecessor had been a Roman cleric prior to his election—it was quite another to get involved in the see of Milan, which had traditionally enjoyed a privileged position in northern Italy.[46] The Roman usurpation of Milanese autonomy in the late 6th century need not concern us apart from the simple recognition that the Lombard disruption of northern Italy, combined with the continuation of the *Three Chapters* Schism, provided the Roman see with an opportunity to assert itself in the Milanese Church.[47] The election of Constantius in 593 was the first time in which Rome played a pivotal role in a Milanese election. Aware that his involvement was unprecedented, Gregory was more circumspect in this election than he was in regions where the Roman see had been accustomed to asserting its influence. Nevertheless, he was delighted to secure the election of Constantius, a cleric he had known in Constantinople and who we have every reason to believe shared the pontiff's ascetic inclinations.[48]

It is in Sicily, however, where we see most clearly the priorities governing Gregory's involvement in the selection of other bishops. Of the nine episcopal elections that occurred in Sicily during Gregory's pontificate, there were only two in which Gregory openly interfered, and in both cases, the episcopal see in question was Syracuse, the senior of the two

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[44] Gregory, *Reg.* 5.51 (CCSL 140:345): "...tandem uenerabilem fratrem Marinianum presbyterum, quem diu mecum didicere in monasterio conuersatum..."

[45] Gregory, *Reg.* 5.51 (CCSL 140:346): "Ego autem magnam confidentiam habe quia omnipotens Deus, qui eum in suo est dignatus grege praeponere, et ad interiora illum curanda exacuit et ad exteriora gerenda gratiae suae pietate confortat."

[46] In fact, prior to the election of John in Ravenna, that see had been administered by the see of Milan. More than anything, the change in circumstance was precipitated by the Lombard disruption.

[47] In short, the survival of the Milanese Church depended upon financial assistance from its estates in southern Italy, but military pressures put Milan in a client relationship to Rome, which demanded in exchange for its assistance the acceptance of the Roman position on the *Three Chapters* question. When the bishops of Milan were forced to go into exile in Genoa due to the Lombard presence in northern Italy, Rome pressured Milan to accept the condemnation of the *Three Chapters* and, with time, was able to insert itself into episcopal elections. See Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World*, pp. 133–37.

[48] See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, pp. 148–49.

archdioceses of the island.[49] The first appointment went to Maximian, who had been abbot of Gregory's monastery in Rome, who had accompanied him to Constantinople in the 580s, and who was the subject of one of the miraculous stories of the *Dialogues*.[50] Clearly, this man fit Gregory's model of a spiritual leader and upon his arrival in Syracuse, the pontiff made him the senior *rector* of the papal estates in Sicily. But the election of Maximian's successor, John, in 595, brings into question the notion that Gregory always appointed Roman clerics. While it is true that Maximian had been a member of the Roman clergy, John was a member of the Sicilian clergy. He possessed the ascetic credentials and administrative competence that Gregory required and it does not at all appear to have been a problem that he was not a Roman cleric, even for a see as prominent as that of Syracuse.[51]

Gregory's willingness to advance local clerics is revealing, and it defies 20th-century scholarly narratives of Gregory's activity.[52] Of the seven other cases of Sicilian elections that occurred during the pontiff's tenure (Lipari, Triocala, Tyndari, Messina, Lilybaeum, Malta, and Palermo), the surviving contemporary evidence reveals nothing about the elections in four of them (Lipari, Triocala, Messina, and Tyndari), apart from the fact that Benenatus, the bishop of Tyndari, had been a priest in the diocese prior to his election—thus, he too was likely a native Sicilian.[53] In the final three cases (the sees of Lilybaeum, Malta, and Palermo), we learn that Gregory instructed his agents to encourage the clergy and people to select a candidate from among the local clergy.[54] As long as the local populations never advanced a candidate that Gregory knew to lack ascetic

[49] See Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter*, pp. 142–46.

[50] Cf. *Dialogues* 3.36. The story is repeated in *HEv.* 34. See Demacopoulos, *Five Models*, p. 226 n. 159.

[51] Gregory, *Reg.* 5.54 and 6.18 (CCSL 140:349, 388). The only thing that we know for certain about John is that he was serving in the see of Catania, which, without other evidence, suggests that he was a native Sicilian. Given the fact that Catania is located on the eastern shore of the island, which had the largest Greek population, John's principal language and liturgical tradition would likely have been Greek. See Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter*, pp. 143–46.

[52] For more on Richards' (*Popes and the Papacy*) and Martyn's (*Letters*) ideas concerning Gregory's activity in Sicily, see Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter*, pp. 145–46.

[53] This is evinced by a comparison of *Reg.* 3.59 and *Reg.* 9.181.

[54] For example, when Gregory wrote to his rector Cyprian concerning the vacancy in the see of Lilybaeum, he did not advocate for any candidate—the eventual bishop, Decius, was a member of local clergy. See Gregory, *Reg.* 5.23 and 6.13 (CCSL 140:290, 382).

credentials, he was perfectly willing to accept their choice and refrained from promoting his own candidate.[55]

As an important corollary to the selection of bishops, Gregory's correspondence also offers ample evidence of the pontiff's scrutiny of existing bishops. Indeed, Sicily offers several examples of Gregory's scrutiny of subordinate bishops who lacked the precepts of spiritual leadership outlined in the *Pastoral Rule*. During Gregory's tenure, his agents brought six Sicilian bishops to trial for alleged crimes.[56] In nearly every case, the bishops stood accused of moral crimes, which in Gregory's theological imagination, were akin to a lack of ascetic discipline. Although only three of these men were ultimately condemned, each case demonstrates Gregory's willingness to investigate the conduct of regional bishops who were accused of impropriety by their local communities.[57]

Turning our attention now to Gregory's own exercise of spiritual leadership, we find ample evidence of the pontiff employing a gradual or flexible approach to spiritual supervision as outlined in his *Pastoral Rule*. This is true both with respect to his personal interactions with individual correspondents and with respect to his broader plan of spreading Christianity among Germanic and Jewish populations. As we noted in the discussion of the *Pastoral Rule*, Gregory understood the spiritual advancement of an individual to require a specific long-term plan. When an aristocratic correspondent returned to lay life after a brief stint as a monk, Gregory cautiously criticized the decision but remained in correspondence with him for many years so that he could keep apprised of his spiritual development and offer advice as needed.[58]

The correspondence between Gregory and Augustine of Canterbury, however, offers the most revealing insight into Gregory's implementation of the spiritual father/spiritual disciple model for supervision. Gregory had selected Augustine from among his monks in Rome to lead the mission to Kent. As the mission progressed, Gregory boasted to his episcopal colleagues that thousands of converts to Christianity in England were coming to the faith through the miracles attributed to Augustine. But in his correspondence with Augustine, Gregory restrained his excitement and

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[55] Interestingly, the candidate selected by the people of Malta in 598 was the same Trajan that Gregory had rejected for the see of Syracuse in 595. It is worth noting that even in this case, Gregory did not do anything to oppose the will of the local population. See Gregory, *Reg.* 9.25 and 10.1 (CCSL 140A:585–86, 825–27).

[56] See Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter*, pp. 141–42.

[57] See Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter*, pp. 141–42.

[58] See Gregory, *Reg.* 1.33, 6.42 and 11.18 (CCSL 140/140A:394–1, 414–15, 887–88).

even cautioned his disciple that success could easily lead to pride and, as a consequence, could undo the good already achieved.[59]

But Augustine was now a spiritual director in his own right and, as such, was faced with a series of pastoral decisions regarding the recently converted Angli. Seeking guidance from his own director, Augustine wrote to Gregory with a series of questions regarding the extent to which he should bend the rules in pursuit of a greater pastoral good. Gregory's response to Augustine, often known as the *Responsa*, offers the single best example of Gregory's pastoral philosophy put into practice.[60] For example, Gregory permitted the marriage of second cousins and reduced the impediments to the reception of the Eucharist. In doing so, he explained the pastoral rationale of *condescensio*:[61]

> At this time, indeed, the holy Church corrects some things through fervour, tolerates some things through clemency, suppresses some things with consideration and at the same time endures the same things, so that it often happens that she might subdue what is withstood by enduring and suppressing.

The best example, of course, of Gregory's willingness to pursue a policy of temporary accommodation for a long-term pastoral good, is his decision to repurpose the pagan shrines of Kent for Christian use. As I have argued elsewhere, this was not a change in position (as it is typically understood), but a deliberate and consistent policy of allowing the particular circum-

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[59] Gregory, *Reg.* 11.36 (CCSL 140A:926): "Scio enim quia omnipotens Deus per dilectionem tuam in gente quam eligi uoluit magna miracula ostendit. Vnde necesse est ut de eodem dono caelesti et timendo gaudeas et gaudendo pertimescas: gaudeas uidelicet, quia Anglorum animae per exteriora miracula ad interiorem gratiam pertrahuntur, pertimescas uero, ne inter signa quae fiunt infirmus animus in sui praesumptione se eleuet et, unde foras in honorem tollitur, inde per inanem gloriam intus cadat." "For I know that almighty God has displayed great miracles through your love in the nation that he has chosen. Wherefore, you should rejoice with fear and trembling for this heavenly gift. Rejoice because the souls of the Angli are drawn by outward miracles to inward grace; but tremble because these signs that are performed through you... might give rise to vainglory."

[60] Because the *Responsa* does not survive among the Roman collections of Gregory's correspondence (it survives through Bede), some scholars have questioned its authenticity. For the prevailing defence of authenticity, see Margaret Deanesly and Paul Grosjean, "The Canterbury Edition of the Answers of Pope Gregory I to St. Augustine," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 10 (1959), 1–49.

[61] Gregory, *Responsa* in Bede, *HE* 1.27 (SC 489: 216): "In hoc enim tempore sancta ecclesia quaedam per fervorem corrigit, quaedam per mansuetudinem tolerat, quaedam per considerationem dissimulat, atque ita portat et dissimulat, ut saepe malum quod adversatur portando et dissimulando compescat."

stance of a situation to guide the pastoral solution.[62] In short, Gregory believed that, because the Angli were accustomed to gather at these shrines for religious purposes, it would be more beneficial in the long-run simply to transform those sites into Christian churches rather than to disrupt local tradition by destroying the shrines.[63]

We find a similar long-term approach to his conversion of other groups as well. Perhaps the most surprising example stems from his policy regarding the Jewish farmers on the papal estates in Sicily. Although Gregory was adamant that the Jews could not be forced, through violence or intimidation, to convert to Christianity and even though he consistently protected the freedom of Jews to practice their faith, he was at the same time perfectly willing to employ otherwise questionable techniques to secure their adoption of Christianity.[64] When it came to his attention that there were a large number of tenant farmers on the papal estates in Sicily, Gregory advised his *rector* that all the Jews who converted to Christianity would have their rent reduced by one third. Even though he was perfectly aware that most who accepted the offer would be doing so for the wrong reason (i.e. out of financial gain rather than faith), Gregory determined that a greater good could be achieved because their children and grand-children would be raised within the Church.[65] We might say that this was taking the idea of gradual conversion to an extreme.

The Legacy of Gregory's "pastor"

It has often been noted that Gregory's *Pastoral Rule* was one of the only Latin texts translated into Greek and circulated within the Greek Church during its author's lifetime.[66] In part, of course, we can attribute this privileged position to the fact that Gregory was so well connected with the imperial court—he was godfather to the emperor's oldest son, Theodosius.[67] But at least part of the reason that the *Pastoral Rule*, and

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[62] Demacopoulos, "Gregory the Great and the Pagan Shrines of Kent," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), 353–69. For an alternative interpretation, see Robert Markus, "Gregory the Great and a Papal Mission Strategy," *Studies in Church History* 6 (1970), 29–38.

[63] Gregory, *Reg.* 11.56 (CCSL 140A:961–62).

[64] Concerning his arguments against the use of violence, see *Reg.* 2.4, 3.37, 4.9, and 4.21 (CCSL 140:92–93, 182–83, 226, 239). Concerning his rebuke of a bishop who destroyed a Jewish synagogue, see *Reg.* 1.34 (CCSL 140:42).

[65] Gregory, *Reg.* 5.7 (CCSL 140:273).

[66] See Andrew Louth, "Gregory in the Byzantine Tradition", in this volume.

[67] See Matthew Dal Santo, "Gregory, the Emperor and the Empire", in this volume.

Gregory's reputation more generally, was well received in the Christian East is because it was in many ways a refinement and expansion on a pastoral tradition first articulated by Gregory Nazianzen and then subsequently adopted by the Byzantine Church. Pope Gregory had, in effect, developed Nazianzen's idea of the active/contemplative, and he similarly insisted on measuring one's aptitude for spiritual leadership in accordance with the ascetic and administrative registers that Nazianzen had first identified. It is, in fact, worth noting that Nazianzen is the only Christian authority, save the biblical authors, cited by Pope Gregory in the *Pastoral Rule*.

In the West, Gregory's *Pastoral Rule* was even better known. Not only was it among the most copied manuscripts to circulate in the Middle Ages, its ideas and ideals can be found in many subsequent medieval attitudes concerning leadership, the link between leadership and responsibility, and the reflexive connection between moral character and effective leadership. We need look no further than Alfred the Great's decision to translate the *Pastoral Rule* into Anglo Saxon and disseminate it among his clients as the premier example of (secular) governance. So, too, we might describe the *Pastoral Rule* as an important (albeit largely overlooked) source for the western Church's eventual decision to pursue a policy of clerical celibacy in all of its ranks. Although Gregory's language of spiritual leadership in the *Pastoral Rule* is much broader (and perhaps even more exalted) than the parish priest, he leaves little room in his treatise for a married man to maintain the degree of ascetic detachment that he believed to be necessary for a successful pastoral ministry.

In the end, we might conclude by noting that the *Pastoral Rule* demonstrates Gregory to have been a far more sophisticated and nuanced thinker than has generally been observed. Not only does the text synthesize and mediate a great variety of ascetic and pastoral ideas from earlier centuries, it showcases Gregory's unique vision of spirituality, which identified the summit of perfection in the service of others.

CHAPTER TEN

HAGIOGRAPHY AND THE CULT OF SAINTS

Stephen Lake

Gregory's *Dialogi* are the most important hagiographical text written in Italy in Late Antiquity, and they enjoyed considerable popularity in Europe through the Middle Ages. At first sight, however, they have often seemed to be an anomaly when compared with the remaining corpus of his writings. Partly for this reason, a sustained effort has been made to show that they were not written by Gregory.

The authenticity of the *Dialogi* was first challenged by humanist scholars in the 16th century, who were unable to reconcile Gregorian authorship with their literary style and language and the apparent superstition which they reflect; they were held to diverge markedly from Gregory's other writings. Protestant polemic contributed to the debate, in which scholars were reluctant to see in Gregory a proponent of notions such as purgatory, the magical power of alms-giving and the Mass. It was subsequently observed that there is a striking silence concerning the *Dialogi* during the 7th century, which, it was assumed, there would not have been had Gregory been their author. In his 1987 monograph, Francis Clark rehearsed the history of this question, and argued that the *Dialogi* were published only *c.*670–80: on this view, the discussion between Gregory and the deacon Peter, which provides the formal structure of the text, was constructed from authentic Gregorian writings deposited in the papal archive, while the miracle stories which serve to illustrate the discussion were composed by a forger, who presented the whole as a genuine work by the pope.[1] Clark's interpretation seeks to preserve an impression of Gregory as a spiritual author palatable to those who do not wish to see in him a naïve believer in the miraculous or an advocate of questionable Catholic practices; it thus makes a less able, more credulous individual responsible for those elements.

The resulting modern debate has challenged scholars to re-examine the work, and to provide cogent explanations for those elements vulnerable to

[1] Francis Clark, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1987).

an argument such as Clark's; the overwhelming conclusion has nonetheless been a renewed defence of their authenticity.[2] Gregory was a man of his time, and there is little in the *Dialogi* which cannot be found in other texts from the 2nd and 3rd centuries onward; it would indeed be more difficult to account for a Gregory who questioned or denied beliefs which by his time had become so prevalent. We therefore do not improve our understanding of him by attempting to deny that he held beliefs which were also held by his contemporaries. His correspondence shows that he sent relics as gifts and therefore presumably also believed in their efficacy,[3] and he repeated nine stories in the *Dialogi* which he had already recounted in his *Homiliae in evangelia*.[4] Other writings whose authenticity is not in dispute thus suggest that elements of the *Dialogi* are genuinely Gregorian.[5] The fact that the *Dialogi* do not seem to have circulated widely in the 7th century is not significant, insofar as the same is true of many other writings; in this period, there is proportionately less evidence for the copying and study of manuscripts than for almost any other century in European history, irrespective of the reputations of their authors.[6]

The aim of the present chapter is to provide a guide to the reading and interpretation of the *Dialogi*, and to situate them within the broader hagiographical context primarily of late antique Italy. In the context of hagiography, I would distinguish three interlocking but separate subjects: concepts of (living) saints or holy men and women; the cult of (dead) saints and their tombs; and the literary representation of these saints, or "hagiography". We are here concerned primarily with that literary

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[2] For summary and further bibliography, including other publications by Clark and responses to him, see Salvatore Pricoco et al., "Dialogi: Autenticità," in *Enciclopedia gregoriana*, eds Giusseppe Cremascoli and Antonella Degl'Innocenti (Florence, 2008), pp. 88–89.

[3] See e.g. John M. McCulloh, "The Cult of Relics in the Letters and 'Dialogues' of Pope Gregory the Great: A Lexicographical Study," *Traditio* 32 (1976), 145–84, with references. Gregory, *Reg.* 4.30 (CCSL 140:248–50), for example, also attests to portents and death attending the disturbance of saints' tombs, reflecting ideas comparable with those in stories in the *Dialogi*.

[4] *Dial.* 4.15; 4.16; 4.17; 4.20; 4.28; 4.40.2–5; 4.40.6–9; 4.58; 4.59.1 (eds Adalbert de Vogüé and Paul Antin, *S. Gregorii Magni Dialogi*, SC 251, 260, 265 [Paris, 1978/1979/1980]). De Vogüé (SC 251:93) notes that these stories are used differently within the context of the *Dialogi*. All references to the *Dialogi* are taken from the SC edition.

[5] de Vogüé, SC 251:29–31, mentions additional correspondences.

[6] This is based on the few surviving manuscripts from this period and the use of palimpsests, implying a shortage of parchment; extant library catalogues; and limited evidence of the citing of other works in, or their obvious influence on, writings from this period. De Vogüé, SC 251:141–43, summarizes evidence of circulation in the 7th and 8th centuries.

representation. As with all attempts to classify literary genres, there is some dispute over the extent to which hagiography may be defined as a genre; here, it is assumed to be a genre constituted primarily by an adaptation of classical biography and Christian Gospels, and characterized by the elements discussed throughout this chapter.

The Dialogi*: Composition, Structure, and Themes*

The writing of the *Dialogi* can be dated on the evidence of letters and internal indications to the period between July 593 and November 594.[7] The work is said to have been composed at the request of some of Gregory's fellow monks who wished to know more about Italian saints.[8] Gregory also justifies both the composition of the *Moralia in Iob* and the *Homiliae in Ezechielem* by claiming that he wrote them at the request of his "fratres".[9] It should be noted, though, that it was a classical rhetorical convention, adopted by Christian authors, to claim that books were written at the insistence of others and not on one's own initiative, as it was deemed unbecoming of well-born men to be seen as professional authors.[10] To this extent at least, it therefore remains less than certain whether the *Dialogi* are in some manner a response to the demands of others, or whether they are entirely the creation of Gregory himself. In outward form, they consist of reports of four discussions held between Gregory and his deacon Peter,[11] apparently over four consecutive days, in which Gregory undertakes to demonstrate that there have been saints in Italy just as there have been in other regions; he was conceivably seeking to provide an Italian equivalent to Gallic and eastern saints.

The *Dialogi* are arranged in four books, the third and fourth of which are approximately twice as long as the first and second. Books 1 and 3 consist essentially of a series of miracle stories associated with a total of 49 individuals and groups. Book 2 diverges from this pattern in that it consists of a full-length *Vita* of Benedict of Nursia, and so includes stories exclusively associated with him. On the other hand, Book 2 preserves the

[7] See de Vogüé, SC 251:25–27.

[8] See Gregory, *Reg.* 3.50 (CCSL 140:195–96).

[9] See Francesco Tateo, "La struttura dei dialoghi di Gregorio Magno," *Vetera Christianorum* 2 (1965), 101–27, at 104–06, who notes themes common to all three *proemia*.

[10] See further e.g. Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm, 1964).

[11] For Peter, see de Vogüé, SC 251:44–45.

formal structure of a discussion, several themes addressed in Book 2 are also taken up elsewhere, and stories similar to those narrated there also occur in the remaining books.[12] Book 4 is superficially like the preceding three. However, it displays a more carefully argued exposition around the nature of the soul, death, and the afterlife. The *proemium* to Book 4 takes up the theme of contemplation and its loss, which is also the starting point of the *proemium* of Book 1, so that Book 4 appears in a sense to be making a new beginning. Unlike the earlier books, it includes a significant number of stories in which saints are not the protagonists, all of the stories borrowed from his *Homiliae in evangelia* (590–91) are inserted here, the arrangement and content of many of the stories are less complex and include several blocks of "doublets", and many types of miracle common in the earlier books are absent. It would therefore appear that Book 4 represents a clear development over the first three books in Gregory's conception and purpose in writing the *Dialogi*; if so, it might then be further argued that it is the content of this book which was most important to him. While the formal literary structure of a discussion combined with the narration of illustrative stories is maintained throughout the four books, the character of the books varies in the respects just indicated.

Even if we assume that the *Dialogi* did originate in an actual colloquy between Gregory, Peter, and perhaps other monks, the work must at least have been subjected to some revision. While it includes details of verisimilitude, it is too carefully constructed to be a verbatim report, and omits potentially extraneous material. Peter serves as an interlocutor who poses questions, expresses doubt and uncertainty, or approbation, and who moves the discussion from one subject to the next, but otherwise makes no significant contribution of his own.[13] The dialogue was a pedagogical literary genre in both Classical Antiquity, familiar from Plato

[12] De Vogüé, *Dialogues* 1, SC 251, esp. pp. 51–65, considers aspects of this structure and sees a triptych formed by Books 1–3 with Book 2 as its centrepiece. This is strictly speaking true, as long as we are not anachronistic in the significance which we ascribe to Benedict there: for Gregory, Benedict is not the founder of a monastic "order" but merely an exemplary figure.

[13] Marc Van Uytfanghe, "Scepticisme doctrinal au seuil du Moyen Âge? Les objections du diacre Pierre dans les *Dialogues* de Grégoire le grand," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 315–26, has argued that Peter's interjections may reflect genuine uncertainty about the subjects discussed. See also Matthew Dal Santo, "Gregory the Great and Eustratius of Constantinople: The *Dialogues on the Miracles of the Italian Fathers* as an Apology for the Cult of Saints," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009), 421–57; idem, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2012).

and Cicero, for example, and in early and medieval Christianity, used by, among others, Minucius Felix, Augustine, Cassian and later, Eriugena; it was not a condition of this genre that such writings were necessarily records of actual discussions.[14] Gregory need not have modelled his work on any particular author, but the form should have been familiar to any educated reader.

Besides the discussion which structures the work, Gregory has inserted around 170 pericopae which consist of short accounts of the characters and miracles of a large number of saints.[15] Christian hagiography as a literary genre began with records of the arrest, interrogation, and deaths of martyrs (*acta martyrum*);[16] these were not full-length accounts of the lives of confessors and martyrs, but concentrated on the events which made them deserving of being remembered. Such reports, whether those which have survived or others like them, were sometimes read publicly in Church communities on the anniversaries of their deaths. The *Vita Cypriani* (Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, d. *c.*258) represents a transition from an account of a martyrdom to a more extensive account of the martyr's life,[17] although it would be another century before a proliferation of *Lives* of male and female saints (Greek, *hagioi*)—and after 312 usually, no longer martyrs, but almost invariably ascetics and clergy—began to proliferate, following the appearance of Athanasius' *Vita Antonii*.[18] While these are typically chronological narratives running from the birth to the death of their subjects, hagiographical elements were also adopted by Church historians, as well as in a range of other kinds of works. These other works include collections of short portraits of a group of individual saints, which often omit much of the material usually included in a *Vita*, and may do

[14] See further John Moorhead in this volume; also e.g. Bernd Rainer Voss, *Der Dialog in der frühchristlichen Literatur* (Munich, 1970).

[15] The calculation of such a total can vary marginally, depending upon how passages are analysed, whether every individual incident and comment is counted separately, or whether in some cases an introductory explanation is included together with a miracle report which follows it. Strict separation is extremely difficult; de Vogüé, SC 251:85 and n. 2, finds *c.*45 (Book 1), 45 (Book 2), 70 (Book 3), and 50 (Book 4). My calculation includes passages which do not report a miracle but which can be viewed as not belonging to Gregory and Peter's discussion, and all stories not pertaining to saints.

[16] *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, ed. Herbert Musurillo (Oxford, 1972).

[17] Pontius, *Vita Caecilii Cypriani*, in *Vita di Cipriano. Vita di Ambrogio. Vita di Agostino*, ed. A.A.R. Bastiaensen, trans. Luca Canali and Carlo Carena, 4th ed. (Milan, 1997), pp. 4–49.

[18] Athanasius of Alexandria, *Vita Antonii*, ed. Gerard J.M. Bartelink, SC 400 (Paris, 1994).

little more than provide one or two exemplary stories and a summary of a saint's teaching.[19]

With the exception of Book 2, Gregory's *Dialogi* are also such a work. Other examples include the anonymous *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca*, Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Historia religiosa*, Cassian's *Conlationes*, the *apophthegmata* collections, and Gregory of Tours' *Liber in gloria confessorum, Liber in gloria martyrum*, and *Liber vitae patrum*.[20] Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi* assume the dialogue form, and were possibly known to Gregory, but are primarily concerned with Martin of Tours.[21] Theodoret's work bears some resemblance to Gregory's *Dialogi*, and de Vogüé lists a number of parallels between them, at least one of which seems probable.[22] At the same time, however, Gregory did not know Greek sufficiently to have been able to have read a Greek source, so that any alleged borrowings from such sources must therefore be explained either by use of a Latin translation, or of a translator, or the mediation of an oral tradition.[23] The *Historia monachorum*, the *Historia Lausiaca*, as well as Athanasius' *Vita Antonii* (which has considerably coloured parts

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[19] For our purposes, see e.g. F. Scorza Barcellona, "Agli inizi dell'agiografia occidentale," in *Hagiographies: Histoire internationale de la littérature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire en Occident des origines à 1550*, ed. Guy Philippart, vol. 3 (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 17–97, and vol. 5, *Hagiographie d'Italie* (Turnhout, 2010). Claudia Rapp, "Saints and Holy Men," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2, *Constantine to c.600*, eds Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 548–66, provides a convenient summary of some aspects of this subject; see also below, n. 69.

[20] *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto. Édition critique du texte grec et traduction annotée* (ed. André-Jean Festugière, Subsidia Hagiographica 53 [Brussels, 1971]), and in the Latin version of Rufinus (ed. Eva Schulz-Flügel, *Tyrannius Rufinus, Historia Monachorum sive De vita sanctorum patrum*, Patristische Texte und Studien 34 [Berlin, 1990]); Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* (Latin) (PL 73:1091–1218; new ed. and trans. Adelheid Wellhausen, *Die lateinische Übersetzung der Historia Lausiaca des Palladius: Textausgabe mit Einleitung*, Patristische Texte und Studien 51 [Berlin, 2003]); Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Historia religiosa* (eds Pierre Canivet and Alice Leroy-Molinghen, *Histoire des Moines en Syrie*, 2 vols, SC 234, 257 [Paris, 1977–79]); John Cassian, *Conlationes* (eds Michael Petschenig and Gottfried Kreuz, CSEL 13, 2nd ed. [Vienna, 2004]); *Apophthegmata patrum* (the alphabetical collection: PG 65:71–440; the systematic collection: ed. Jean-Claude Guy, *Les apophthègmes des pères, collection systématique*, 3 vols, SC 387, 474, 498 [Paris, 1993, 2003, 2005]); Gregory of Tours (ed. Bruno Krusch, *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Miracula et opera minora*, MGH SSRM 1,2 [Hannover, 1969]).

[21] Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi libri II de vita sancti Martini* (CSEL 1:152–216).

[22] *Dial.* 3.16.9; cf. Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 26.10 (SC 257:178–80).

[23] See discussion in Joan M. Petersen, *The* Dialogues *of Gregory the Great in their Late Antique Cultural Context* (Toronto, 1984), here pp. 181–88; Petersen seeks to explore a broader possible eastern background. See also, idem, "'Homo omnino Latinus'? The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great," *Speculum* 62 (1987), 529–51.

of Gregory's depiction of Benedict)[24] were all translated into Latin, but Theodoret was not.

Gregory was indubitably familiar with a wide range of hagiographical as well as other writings, though to none of which he explicitly refers in the *Dialogi*.[25] In his edition of this work, Adalbert de Vogüé has included parallels between many of Gregory's stories and other works from which he arguably borrowed, thereby also giving an impression of the range of Gregory's reading. Yet de Vogüé's apparatus is comprehensive rather than complete, and does not provide a detailed analysis of every parallel in order to determine whether in fact Gregory had borrowed from these sources, and if so, then in what way; such an analysis remains for the present a desideratum. However, the *Dialogi* are unlike any of these other texts. Other hagiographical texts provide a narrative, the exemplary character of which is assumed to be self-evident and sufficient in itself. Cassian's *Conlationes* are not a hagiographical text in this sense, providing only brief vignettes of a small number of desert fathers and an occasional anecdote; the bulk of those conversations consist in discussions of spiritual and theological subjects supported by numerous biblical examples. Gregory's *Dialogi* resemble this approach in some respects, but at the same time diverge from it, as they do from more conventional hagiographical writings. Gregory narrates his stories not for their own self-evident exemplary character, but in order to illustrate his teaching: the stories are therefore subordinate to his didactic purpose. Perhaps the text which most closely resembles the *Dialogi* is Gregory of Tours' *Liber vitae patrum*, each chapter of which includes a didactic preface;[26] it was only completed *c.*592, but might have been known to the pope. Yet Gregory the Great departs from any of his possible models, and has thereby created a new form of hagiographical writing.

The claim that the *Dialogi* are based upon colloquies which occurred within a monastic setting, and that they were written in response to a

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[24] See also *Dial.* 3.4.2, and de Vogüé's notes, ibid.

[25] Excepting Rufinus' *HE* and the *Passio Donati* (Donatus, bishop of Arezzo, d. 362) at *Dial.* 1.7.2–3; and Uranius Presbyter's *De obitu Paulini ad Pacatum* (PL 53:859–66) at *Dial.* 3.1.9. Gregory has also used works by Augustine here, including *Enchiridion, De cura pro mortuis gerenda* and *De civ. Dei*, though without ever mentioning him.

[26] On this text, see e.g. Adele Monaci Castagno, "Il vescovo, l'abate e l'eremita: tipologia della santità nel Liber Vitae Patrum di Gregorio di Tours," *Augustinianum* 24 (1984), 235–64; Conrad Leyser, "'Divine Power Flowed from this Book': Ascetic Language and Episcopal Authority in Gregory of Tours' *Life of the Fathers*," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, eds Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden, 2002), pp. 281–94.

request, suggests that Gregory's immediately envisaged audience was monastic and clerical. With the exception of some of the episodes included in Book 4, the protagonists of the *Dialogi* are also all monks or nuns and clergy. However literate the wider population may have been in this period—always a difficult question to answer[27]—the probability in terms of the copying and circulation of books is that the readership would likewise have been confined to monks and clergy, and an occasional interested nobleman. The fact that (contrary to some interpretations) Gregory's language and writing style are formal would support this conclusion. Although the themes of the work, such as the living of a virtuous life, are in principle equally pertinent to all professing Christians, much of the discussion concerns a manner of life only pursued by monks. The stories which he took from his *Homiliae in evangelia* had presumably been preached to the general public, yet if the content of the *Dialogi* was to reach a wider audience, it would best do so through being preached or mediated in other ways by its principal readership.[28]

The preface to the first book introduces three aspects which are developed throughout the work: the task of biblical exposition, the theme of contemplation, and the desire to demonstrate that there had also been saints in Italy. Gregory apologizes that, in order to talk about saints, it is necessary to interrupt the usual occupation of expounding the Bible.[29] While the *Dialogi* appear to be an altogether different kind of work from biblical exposition, there is in fact a measure of continuity. The inclusion here of anecdotes which had already been used in his *Homiliae in evangelia* suggests that, like other preachers before him, Gregory had already come to view examples of Christian experience as confirming or illustrating biblical teaching, and the entire *Dialogi* can be viewed from this perspective if, in this case, biblical exposition is not taken to be sequential commentary on a particular book but rather a more distilled summary of its teaching on the Christian life. Many of the interjections made by Peter

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[27] See e.g. Erich Auerbach, *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter* (Bern, 1958).

[28] On the general problem of audience, see e.g. Dieter Von Der Nahmer, *Die lateinische Heiligenvita. Eine Einführung in die lateinische Hagiographie* (Darmstadt, 1994), pp. 170–78; Wolfert S. Van Egmond, "The Audience of Early Medieval Hagiographical Texts," in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. Marco Mostert (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 41–68. On Gregory's language and audience, see also de Vogüé, SC 251:31–44. None of these considerations, however, are conclusive.

[29] Gregory, *Dialogi* 1, praef. On Gregory's biblical exposition, see Scott de Gregorio in this volume.

lead Gregory to cite and expound biblical passages in order to answer his questions, so that this pattern might be considered as continuing precisely their ostensibly interrupted practice. Many stories included in the *Dialogi* also either explicitly imitate biblical narratives or are less overtly inspired by them. In this way, Gregory's saints are like the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and even Jesus himself. The fact that Gregory, although he borrowed many of his stories from other hagiographical sources, refers to no sources other than the Bible and his own homilies, also serves to emphasize continuity between the biblical epoch and the present.

The work begins with Gregory lamenting that his episcopal responsibilities have deprived him of the tranquillity of soul necessary to contemplate spiritual truth and reality, and as a consolation, he considers reflecting on the lives of men who have renounced the world.[30] Peter then asks him to recount stories of Italian thaumaturges. The principal theme of the first books is the humility of the saints, despite their ability to perform miracles; yet a variety of other questions are posed, including whether miracles are performed through prayer or virtue or the will of the saint, the quality of patience, the respect which should be shown to saints (alive or dead), the way in which they imitate biblical figures (conscious imitation of Jesus is a means towards salvation), and whether predestination can be influenced by prayer. Other sub-themes include God's protection of his servants; that those who appear to be virtuous may not always be so in fact; unforeseen outcomes of the saints' charismata; and that purity of speech should come from contemplation and separation from the world.

Book 2 represents Benedict as gradually growing in virtue and experience through many challenges posed by the devil, and eventually acquiring a gift of prophecy. This gift allows him to see or know hidden things—the secrets of God, the future, and the actions of men and demons which others cannot see—and in turn to assist or warn others. Benedict's meeting with his sister Scholastica occasions a return to the theme of contemplation: this is the discussion of heavenly matters which Benedict enjoyed with Scholastica, but which Gregory is also conducting with Peter (and his audience) precisely in the *Dialogi*, and this enables the soul to see invisible things. At the end of this book, we have stories of souls visibly ascending to heaven, a subject which is resumed in Book 4.[31]

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[30] On Gregory's understanding of contemplation, see Carole Straw in this volume.

[31] The belief that souls could be seen ascending to heaven is not originally a Christian belief: see e.g. Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum, Divus Iulius* 88; C. Suetonius Tranquillus, *Die*

In Book 3, Peter expresses wonder at stories of the dead being raised, but Gregory suggests that a greater miracle is to lead a soul to conversion—a spiritual resurrection. There are two kinds of martyrdom: the physical or public, and the "white" or secret martyrdom, which is the practice of asceticism. We then have a series of "exempla" about Christians who preferred to die rather than submit to either pagan rites or Arianism. There are also two kinds of compunction, or tears: in the soul which thirsts for God, and weeping in repentance. The book opens and concludes with examples of men who were willing to give their lives for those of others as Jesus did.

Book 4 commences with a preface which parallels that of Book 1, in which he now states that Adam and Eve had once enjoyed the unhindered contemplation of God, but as a result of their sin, they were deprived of it; when compared with his own deprivation through worldly duties, this implies a harsh view of the temporal and physical world. The central subject of this book may be seen as the immortality of the soul, while a series of questions arise from that belief. Gregory therefore depicts the deaths of the saints, how they often knew the times of their deaths in advance, and how other saints or angels come to escort their souls, which can sometimes be seen in corporeal forms, to heaven; on the other hand, demons come for the souls of sinners. An unpleasant death may be a means of purging some hidden sin, and wicked men may have power over people to kill them. The souls of some Christians, but not all, are received into heaven before the general judgement, while other souls begin their eternal suffering in hell before the judgement, and there is also a purifying fire from which the redeemed are eventually released. Gregory argues that a material fire is able to torment or purify an immaterial soul. It is to the advantage of nobody who dies in a state of sin to be buried in a church or near the tomb of a saint, as they may be tormented, or expelled from their tombs and the church. Alms-giving, whether by the living on behalf of the dead or prior to their own deaths, can hasten the release of souls from purgatory, and the sacrifice of the Mass can also benefit people in adversity.[32]

Gregory's exposition of his themes is, as it were, "proven" by the stories; these function as classical exempla. Miracles are central to these stories,

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Kaiserviten/De vita Caesarum, Berühmte Männer/De viris illustribus, ed. and trans. Hans Martinet, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf—Zurich, 2000), p. 138.

[32] Gregory also views the end of the world as imminent: e.g. *Dial.* 3.38.1–4; 4.36.12. On his eschatology, see Jane Baun in this volume.

and yet Gregory claims that miracles, some of which appear quite trivial, have no importance in themselves, and the ability to perform them adds nothing to a man's virtue or sanctity. While this might initially seem a specious claim in this context, he is nonetheless echoing other authors, such as Cassian in his *Conlatio* 15;[33] some *Vitae* are also almost or entirely devoid of any miraculous element. It is the virtue which is manifested through miracles in which the Christian life truly consists. In his *Homiliae in evangelia* 4.3–4, Gregory says that miracles were intended to facilitate the spreading of the gospel in the age of the apostles,[34] which would appear to limit them to that period of time, but in the *Dialogi* he gives no clear definition of a miracle; it may be that he sought to console the population in an era of protracted tribulation.

An Analysis of the Stories

Gregory is obviously familiar with hagiographical conventions. Throughout the *Dialogi*, he deploys a variety of "commonplaces" or *topoi*.[35] His most conspicuous use of a *topos*, however, is his appeal to authorities for the stories which he narrates; there are proportionately few for which he indicates no witness, although these are not always named or clearly specified. In this respect, he is strikingly more assiduous than most hagiographical authors; yet it is equally striking that he almost never claims to have witnessed anything himself.[36]

William McCready's book *Signs of Sanctity* represents a sustained attempt to argue that Gregory is sincere and that, irrespective of the improbability of any of the stories, Gregory had indeed been told them by those from whom he claims to have heard them, rather than having

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[33] CSEL 13:425–36.

[34] See also *Moralia in Iob* 27.18.36–37 (CCSL 143B:1358–59).

[35] For example: a saint is already an old man in his youth (e.g. *Dial.* 2, Praef. 1; 3.18.1); he has a vocation from his earliest youth for the monastic life (1.1.1); he anticipates his own death (2.37.1); his body may remain uncorrupted (3.13.3); the scent of perfume attends death (4.15.5; 4.17.2; 4.49.5); souls are seen ascending from bodies, accompanied by angels or other saints (2.39.1); the author will tell only one story among many (2.36); the widow who loses her only son (1.2.5–6; 3.1.1; 4.36.7–9); the image of stormy seas and the refuge of a harbour (1, Praef. 5); the imagery of the desert (2.1.1); the saint commands a beneficiary not to reveal a miracle (1.9.5); and a saint's deeds are consistent with his words (2.36).

[36] See the lists in William D. McCready, *Signs of Sanctity: Miracles in the Thought of Gregory the Great* (Toronto, 1989), pp. 261–71. Only in *Dial.* 3.33.7–9 is the witness clearly Gregory himself, as the beneficiary of healing, although he may have witnessed several other episodes.

invented or adapted any of them from other sources himself. In the view of the present author, however, this argument amounts to defending a particular view of Gregory divorced from the literary conventions of his day in the same way that other scholars have questioned Gregory's authorship. It is not possible to discuss this argument in detail here. Nonetheless, the letter in which Gregory requests information from Bishop Maximian of Syracuse about Nonnosus, about whom Maximian had obviously already spoken to him,[37] would seem to be the exception rather than the rule: we have no corroborating evidence that he attempted to investigate most of those to whom he ascribes stories, and his claims to this effect in the work itself have no independent value. At best, we might place some confidence in his having received a comparatively detailed account of Benedict from monks who fled from Monte Cassino after the abbey's first destruction in *c.*577,[38] which might also explain why he wrote about Benedict alone at such length. As Gregory was not the advocate of Benedictine monasticism that he was once taken to be,[39] the disproportionate amount of attention which he devotes to Benedict requires another explanation. This is not to suggest that all of the stories, and perhaps even many of the protagonists, are entirely fictitious, but the fact remains that much of the *Dialogi* cannot be verified; even in the case of many bishops, we have no independent record of them. The fact that purported witnesses might still have been alive at the time of writing, or that they were allegedly known to Peter, is not an infallible argument against Gregory's having invented stories. Moreover, if, as will be suggested below, many of the stories are adaptations of material borrowed from other sources, then the likelihood increases that, from a modern perspective, Gregory's claims are—consistent with the convention—disingenuous.

Another practice which is unusually frequent in the *Dialogi* is the use of "doublets". Doublets are two similar stories which occur within a narrative either in direct sequence or in close proximity. Given the fact that particular types of story usually occur in hagiographical sources, and that

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[37] *Reg.* 3.50. See also e.g. *Dial.* 1.10.11; 1.10.19–20; 4.28.1; 4.31.1. Nonnosus is depicted in *Dial.* 1.7, where Maximian is named as a source. Yet even the veracity of the three miracles attributed to Nonnosus is open to question: *Dial.* 1.7.2 is one of several "rock" miracles (see below, n. 41), 1.7.3 is a doublet with 2.1.1–2 and echoes the *Passio Donati*, and 1.7.5–6 reports the multiplication of oil, which may have a biblical model.

[38] See *Dial.* 2, Praef. 2, and 2.15.4; 2.26; 2.27.1–3.

[39] See Kassius Hallinger, "Papst Gregor der Grosse und der hl. Benedikt," in *Commentationes in regulam S. Benedicti*, ed. Basilius Steidle (Rome, 1957), pp. 231–319; and Barbara Müller, "Gregory the Great and Monasticism", in this volume.

some of these are all but inevitable—for example, healing miracles, or a resurrection—it might not seem surprising that they should occur. They would seem to be a particularly Christian element, and perhaps imitate the fact that in the gospels, similar reports occur on a number of occasions, both within a single gospel and especially between the synoptic gospels. At the same time, they may also serve rhetorical functions of emphasis, as a mnemonic aid, and even as stylistic adornment; we might also think of the technique in fiction of narrating a sub-plot which mirrors the principal story.

In many hagiographical sources, there are no doublets, or only one or two pairs might be included; they are common, but not frequent. In the *Dialogi*, by contrast, there is a doublet quality about a substantial majority of the pericopae, so much so that it seems to provide an additional superstructure to the work as a whole. Again, this constitutes a distinctively Gregorian trait. I am extending the concept of doublet here beyond its strict definition, to denote not only stories which resemble one another in subject, but also those which, while substantially different in content, nevertheless include details which tie them to other stories.

Stories may be comparatively simple duplicates: for example, two stories recount how a messenger who has been commissioned to bring gifts to a saint conceals one of the baskets, intending to keep it for himself, but the saint is aware of the deception and warns that there is a snake in the concealed basket.[40] Numerous stories are less similar in their content and may have been told for different reasons, but still include some details in common, and thereby recall one another: for example, several stories in Books 1–3 concern monastic communities in the mountains and the presence of threatening rocks,[41] or are set in a cloister garden.[42] Some stories are explicitly associated by the fact that they occurred in the same region, whether or not they all have the same protagonist; or they occurred during the same period, for example, during a recent plague in Rome, or during the Lombard conquest. A number of stories replicate biblical narratives in some form: for example, oil, wine, bread or other commodities are miraculously multiplied.[43] In Books 1–2, such doublets are often scattered, so that they do not immediately follow upon one another, but in Books 3–4, there are instances in which groups of very similar stories

[40] *Dial.* 2.18; 3.14.9.
[41] E.g. *Dial.* 1.1.4; 1.7.2; 1.8.2; 2.9.1; 3.16.5–10.
[42] E.g. *Dial.* 1.3.2–4; 1.4.7; 1.9.15; 3.14.6–7.
[43] E.g. *Dial.* 1.1.1–2; 1.5.2; 1.7.5–6; 1.9.2–4; 1.9.14; 1.9.17; 2.21.1–2; 2.28–29; 3.37.2–7.

are told in sequence: for example, Gregory tells a group of stories about Catholic Christians martyred by Arians, and groups of stories about the machinations of the devil, death-bed scenes, the fate of sinners buried in churches, and the visibility of souls ascending to heaven.[44]

Some stories may also have aspects which associate them with not one but several other different stories simultaneously. As a complex example of a doublet, we may instance an anecdote concerning the saint Constantius at *Dial.* 1.5.4–6. He had acquired a reputation, so that people came to see him. One peasant thus sought him out, and found him on a ladder lighting lamps. Constantius was a dwarf of mean outward appearance, so that the peasant was unwilling to recognize him as a renowned saint and held him in disdain. Constantius, however, was delighted and said that the peasant was the only person to see him for what he was, and thereby demonstrated his own humility, which contrasted with worldly notions of honour and glory. This story contains details and elements which at the same time associate it with other pericopae. At 1.4.13–14, a servant and a noble had shown disrespect towards the saint Equitius, and consequently suffered a physical indisposition, and in his following remarks, Gregory had already commented on the humility of saints and the deceptiveness of outward appearances. At 1.4.20, a peasant in ignorance placed something on the tomb of Equitius in a martyr's church, an act which demonstrated disrespect, whereupon the box was miraculously projected from the tomb. Constantius was lighting lamps, which had also been the subject of a story at 1.5.2, in which lamps that lacked oil had miraculously burned with water; two further stories concerning lamps occur at 1.7.3 (itself a doublet with 2.1.1–2) and 1.7.5–6. Shortly afterwards, at 1.6.1–2, Gregory tells the story of Bishop Marcellinus, physically deformed like Constantius, this time by gout, who stopped a town fire. Constantius did not punish the contemptuous peasant, but the details of disrespect shown to saints and their humility, as well those of churches, lamps, and physical deformity, illustrate the way in which many of Gregory's narratives share motifs with one another, not all of which are germane to the essential message of the stories. Doublets can also assume an opposite or con-

[44] E.g. *Dial.* 1.4.3–6, 1.4.7 (nuns possessed); 1.4.1, 1.4.8 (visions granting exceptional gifts); 1.10.2–5, 2.2.1, 2.4.2–3, 2.8.12–11.2, 2.13.1–3, 3.4.1–3, 3.7.1–9, 3.16.3–4, 3.20.1–2, 3.21.1–4, 3.26.2, 3.33.2–5, 4.19, 4.20.2 (devils); 2.34.1, 2.35.2–3, 2.37.2–3, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11 (souls ascending); 4.12, 4.14, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.20.4, 4.27–4.28, 4.35, 4.36.1–9, 4.40, 4.48–49, 4.51, 4.57.8–14 (death-bed scenes, including visions); 4.31.2–4, 4.32, 4.37.3–14 (other visions, including of the afterlife); 4.50–51 (discussion of dreams). For martyrs, see below, n. 64.

trasting form, as, for example, when two deaths are reported, in the first of which the deceased dies in grace and is attended by saints or angels, whereas the second dies in sin and is attended by demons.[45]

The effect of this technique is to weave a web which joins the material simultaneously at many junctures, thereby creating an impression of unity and consistency. It is also an effective story-telling technique, in which the mind—both Gregory's and the reader's—moves smoothly from one story to another.

A further element which is common in hagiographical texts is the ascription of miracle stories taken from the Bible to the subjects of *Vitae*. The models for these stories may occur in either the Old or the New Testament. They may be direct imitations with the essential details being little changed, or a motif may be employed in a significantly different context.[46] Biblical quotations and imagery may also occur, independent of any miracle narrative. All of this usage is also to be found in the *Dialogi*. We have noted above that this work is partly organized around a *mise en scène* in which Gregory was accustomed to expound the Bible to his monks, and that such exposition occurs within his discussion.

In some cases, this imitation of biblical models is obvious. In Book 2, for example, a series of five episodes is narrated in association with Benedict: a spring of water is created in a rock, an iron axe-head is accidentally lost in a lake but then made to float, a monk walks on water in order to rescue a drowning boy, a bird obediently disposes of some poisoned bread, and Benedict experiences remorse at the death by divine punishment of a priest who had been his enemy. In the subsequent discussion with Peter, it is explicitly stated that each of these events replicates a biblical model: Moses, Elisha, the apostle Peter, Elijah, and David, respectively.[47] These stories are relatively direct and uncomplicated imitations. Gregory argues that the servants of God receive the gift to perform such miracles, which places them within the same historically continuous community of faith with their models. On a different level, it is conceivably immaterial whether or not these stories occurred as Gregory reports them: they are true because the same miracles occurred in biblical history, and they

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[45] E.g. *Dial.* 1.10.17–18 with 1.12.1–3.

[46] See further e.g. Marc Van Uytfanghe, "Modèles bibliques dans l'hagiographie," in *Le Moyen Âge et la Bible*, eds Pierre Riché and Guy Lobrichon, Bibles de tous les temps, vol. 4 (Paris, 1984), pp. 449–88.

[47] *Dial.* 2.5.1–8.9.

therefore *could* occur again. And if any of Gregory's miracles could be regarded as being "true", then by implication, all of them could be.

Other stories are also obvious imitations of biblical episodes, but Gregory does not make any explicit reference to their models; yet he must have expected his audience to have recognized them. In a virtual doublet, for example, Gregory first tells the story of a brother of two sisters who dies, but who is then resurrected by a saint. Following a brief report of another miracle, Gregory then narrates another resurrection story, according to which the priest Severus is sent for because of a sick man, but he delays going, so that the man dies; he then also raises this man from the dead.[48] In the one case, the restored man reports seeing angels and lives for a long time afterwards, while in the second case, demons were seen and the man dies (this time, permanently) after having performed penance. In this case, there is no explicit reference to the story of Lazarus (John 11:1–44), yet the resemblance is difficult to overlook. Parallels are distributed between the two episodes: a Christian lived together with his two sisters, the saint delays his coming so that the sick man dies, whereupon his relatives complain that had he come earlier, the man would not have died (he opened the eyes of the blind, could he then not also have prevented this death?), the dead man is summoned by name from the dead, death is likened to sleep, the saint is sorrowful at the man's death.[49] From one biblical episode, Gregory has made two stories. Lazarus' two sisters, Mary and Martha, were also familiar in the Christian tradition in a separate context, namely, as the models for the contemplative and the active lives.

A larger group of stories are less directly adapted from the Bible, but are arguably similarly indebted to it. These include a range of miracles which, in the central event, repeat or echo biblical events but in which there are few or no other parallels, for example, in context or detail. Exorcisms, healings, resurrections, the motif of the widow who loses her only son, the commanding of nature, obedient or tame wild animals, the multiplication of food, wine and oil and the transformation of elements (such as water into oil), and the survival of a storm all take their models from the Bible, even if the details between the biblical and the hagiographical narratives are not in agreement and no explicit parallel is drawn by Gregory. Other stories may not immediately be recognized as owing their inspiration to

[48] *Dial.* 1.10.17–18 and 1.12.1–3. De Vogüé, ibid., adduces non-biblical parallels here, but they would seem to be superfluous.

[49] There may also be an echo of Luke 16:19–31 here.

the Bible, but plausibly do so; for example, the story of a nun who desired and ate something in the cloister garden and was immediately possessed, contains elements of the story of Eve.[50] Gregory includes a substantial number of such pericopae, all of which, it may be argued, he has entirely invented or at least coloured in the telling with a biblical source. They also demonstrate the extent to which the Bible shaped such men's thought and the way in which they interpreted their experience.

This survey establishes the Bible as an important source for the *Dialogi.* Other hagiographical texts—which themselves also often invent biblically inspired stories—were also sources for Gregory. To take but one example, at *Dial.* 1.4.1–2 he narrates the story of Equitius, who as a young man experienced sexual temptation, until he had a dream in which an angel emasculated him; he subsequently supervised women's cloisters, but warned other monks against following his example. Gregory here seems to have adapted two sources: Cassian's *Conlationes* and the Latin version of Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca.*[51] Cassian narrates the struggles of Serenus to attain perfect chastity until, in a night vision, an angel performed an abdominal surgical procedure which had the same effect of eliminating sexual desire. Cassian says nothing about him supervising women's cloisters, but Palladius reports that an ascetic did so after having been freed of sexual desire. Gregory thus appears to have retold a story more succinctly and in his own words, with the one significant variation in the depiction of the surgical operation, and to have combined it with an example from a second source.[52]

The story according to which Paulinus of Nola sold himself into servitude among the Vandals in order to redeem a widow's only son, and who thereby redeemed all of the captives taken from Campania, is clearly an invention by Gregory.[53] It is not attested of Paulinus independently, but it is also chronologically impossible, as Paulinus died in 431, while the

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[50] *Dial.* 1.4.7. The resemblances include a woman, the setting of the garden, desiring something to eat, and the presence of the devil.

[51] Cassian, *Conlationes* 7.2.1–2 (CSEL 13:180–81); Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 29.2–5 (PL 73:1130–31). I have not been able to consult the new edition of Wellhausen, *Die lateinische Übersetzung.*

[52] For several short comparisons, see de Vogüé, SC 251:128–38; although de Vogüé is also ambivalent about conceding that Gregory has entirely invented stories. It should be noted that when we consider how Late Antique and medieval authors have used other literary sources (and for our purposes, this includes use of the Bible), it becomes clear that they do so in a variety of ways, so that the absence of either verbal similarity or similarity of detail is not conclusive proof that there is no indebtedness.

[53] *Dial.* 3.1.1–8; see de Vogüé's notes, ibid.

Vandals began to raid Italy only from 455. The story is explicitly modelled on Christ's sacrifice, and it includes motifs which can be regarded as *topoi*—assistance offered for a widow's only son, the fact that he has no other means of helping which then occasions a miracle,[54] and the visibility of nobility and its evidence of virtue. Other stories which may be indebted to literary sources have likewise been manipulated in Gregory's retelling of them.[55] His stories then cannot all be regarded as having been reported to him as factual events in the way that he has depicted them.

Gregory's Saints

One stated aim of the *Dialogi* is to demonstrate that there have been exemplary and wonder-working Christians in Italy. Yet Gregory has not drawn upon a range of sources which recount the lives of Italian saints; he has drawn upon a range of other sources in a covert fashion. These unused sources include Paulinus' *Vita Ambrosii*; Gerontius' *Vita Melaniae*; several chapters of Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca*; Jerome's *epistulae* 39, 60, 66, and 77, Ennodius' *Vita Epifanii* and *Vita Antonii*; Eugippius' *Vita Severini*; the *LP* (or its proto-versions); and the acts of a number of martyrs, including the Milanese Protasius and Gervasius, and Felix of Nola.[56] He might also, perhaps, have written about figures such as Boethius, Eugippius, and Cassiodorus.[57] While at least several of these sources were known to Gregory, if not all of them, it is not his use of sources as such which places his

[54] The same motif occurs at *Dial.* 1.9.10; 2.27.1–2.

[55] See e.g. *Dial.* 3.31; 3.2.1–2, and de Vogüé's notes, ibid.

[56] Paulinus of Milan, *Life of St. Ambrose*, ed. Marco Navoni, *Vita di Sant'Ambrogio* (Milan, 1996); *Santa Melania giuniore, Senatrice romana*, ed. Cardinal Rampolla del Tindaro (Rome, 1905); Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* (Greek), ed. and trans. A. Lucot, *Histoire lausiaque*, Textes et documents pour l'étude historique du christianisme (Paris, 1912); Jerome, *ep.* 39 (CSEL 54:293–308); *ep.* 60 (CSEL 54:548–75); *ep.* 66 (CSEL 54:647–65); *ep.* 77 (CSEL 55:37–49); Ennodius, *Vita beatissimi viri Epifani episcopi Ticinensis ecclesiae*, and *De vita beati Antoni*, ed. Frederich Vogel, MGH AA 7 (Berlin, 1885), pp. 84–109, 185–90; Eugippius, *Vie de saint Séverin*, ed. Philipp Régerat, SC 374 (Paris, 1991); *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte*, eds L. Duchesne and C. Vogel, 2nd ed., 3 vols (Paris, 1955–57); Ps. Ambrose, *Inventio et passio SS Geruasii et Protasii* (PL 17:742); Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum* 103 on Felix (MGH, SSRM 1,2:107–09), says that he is not aware of any *passio* for Felix and bases his account on Paulinus' *Carmina* (*S. Pontii metropii Paulini Nolani opera*, pars 2, *Carmina*, eds Wilhelm von Hartel and Margit Kamptner, CSEL 30 [Vienna, 1999]), which Gregory the Great might also have done.

[57] In this context, his reference to Symachus at *Dial.* 4.31.3–4 is the more striking; Symachus was also the father of Galla (see 4.14.1), while he does also tell stories of Popes John I (also mentioned here) and Agapetus; see n. 59 below.

purported purpose in question: it is that he has not undertaken to write an account of familiar Italian saints at all. Moreover, almost all of the stories which he recounts are set in the 6th century, with a few exceptions such as that of Paulinus of Nola.

It has been suggested that Gregory's neglect of the Roman martyrs in the *Dialogi* was due to a conflict between himself and elements of the Roman clergy who had not supported his election,[58] although this argument is largely speculative. Again, if we consider the other material which he has similarly neglected, it becomes probable that all of this neglect is due not to partisanship but rather to his underlying intentions in writing the *Dialogi.* He reports three stories about popes, one about his aunts, one about Paulinus of Nola, and he devotes all of Book 2 to Benedict of Nursia. The stories about Popes John I and Agapetus are not included in the *Liber pontificalis* and may have been invented,[59] and that about Paulinus of Nola is clearly fictive. The *Vita* of Benedict may be based upon the reliable testimony of a group of "Benedictine" monks, but at the time, Benedict would have been all but unknown; use of his *Rule* outside of his own foundations and outside of Italy is only attested for the first time a few years later,[60] while it is the *Dialogi* themselves which helped to make him known. With these possible exceptions, few, if any of Gregory's saints would probably have been known or recognized as saints; and it is unlikely that this fact is coincidental.

Yet Gregory was familiar with the cult of saints, and he accepted current practices. As pope, he sent relics of the apostles and other martyrs (but not any of his own saints) to privileged recipients.[61] In the *Dialogi,* he reports the use of a relic to perform a healing miracle, the dedication of a chapel with a martyr's relics, the list of miracles kept at the tomb of a saint who presumably attracted pilgrims and the miracles that occurred at another tomb. He discusses the fact that Benedict's cave at Subiaco attracted pilgrims, the appearance of saints in visions and the power they

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[58] See e.g. Conrad Leyser, "The Temptations of Cult: Roman Martyr Piety in the Age of Gregory the Great," *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000), 289–307; further, Alan Thacker, "Rome of the Martyrs: Saints, Cults and Relics, Fourth to Seventh Centuries," in Roma felix*: Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome*, ed. Éamonn Ó Carragáin (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 13–49.

[59] *Dial.* 3.2–3; see de Vogüé's notes, ibid. Two of these stories are doublets. The *Lives* of John I and Agapetus occur in the *LP* 55 and 59 resp. (eds Duchesne and Vogel, 1:275–6; 1:287–88).

[60] The earliest attestation comes from Altaripa near Albi *c.*620/630, and Luxeuil, *c.*629.

[61] See above, n. 3.

could exercise after their deaths, and the practice of being buried near saints' shrines.[62] He also includes several reports of martyrs, but these are Catholic Christians martyred by Arian Goths, Lombards, and Vandals, not martyrs from the first Christian centuries. Many of these details reflecting cults of saints are mentioned almost in passing, and Gregory appears to take them for granted; they are not central to the concerns of the *Dialogi*. Some hagiography encourages the veneration of its subjects, and anticipates the establishment of their local cult; obvious examples of this tendency include Martin of Tours and Felix of Nola. Gregory, however, is not writing to this end: he is not encouraging the veneration of any of his saints, nor, more significantly, is he known to have actively sponsored the establishment of a cult around any of them. Some *Vitae* are intended to present their saints in an apologetic fashion as defenders of theological orthodoxy; Ferrand's *Vita Fulgentii* and perhaps Athanasius' *Vita Antonii*, for example, can be seen in this light.[63] Again, while Gregory does give space to Arianism,[64] this is not a central theme of his work.

The most frequent designation of his saints is "man of God" (*vir Dei*) or "man of the Lord" (*vir Domini*), although "holy man" (*vir sanctus*) and "servant of God" (*famulus Dei*) are not unusual; such designations are conventional.[65] As with other saints, Gregory's are monks and clergy, not laymen, excepting his martyrs (who do not perform miracles)[66] and, of

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[62] E.g. *Dial.* 1.2.5–6, 3.15.18 ("relics"); 1.10.2 (dedication); 1.10.19 (list of miracles); 1.4.20 (disrespect towards a saint's tomb); 1.4.21 (a deceased abbot protects his monks); 2.22, 3.1.6, 3.24.1–2, 3.25.1–2, 3.38.2 (appearing in visions); 2.23.2–5, 2.24, 4.33, 4.53, 4.54, 4.55, 4.56 (bodies buried in churches tormented or expelled); 2.38 (miracles at Subiaco and relics of martyrs); 3.22 (a dead saint stops a thief); 3.23.1–4 (a dead abbot makes room for a second corpse); see also 4.22, 4.23, 4.24.1.

[63] *Vie de saint Fulgence de Ruspe de Ferrand, diacre de Carthage*, ed. G.G. Laypere (Paris, 1929); Athanasius, *Vie d'Antoine*, ed. Bartelink.

[64] Notably at *Dial.* 3.11.1–13.3; 3.27–32.

[65] Dal Santo, "Gregory and Eustratius," and now *Debating the Saints' Cult*, argues that Gregory is attempting a defence of the cult of saints against suspicions that it constituted a form of idolatry, and thus that his designations assume a more particular significance; he also suggests Gregory's indebtedness, notably in *Dial.* 4, to an eastern discussion about resurrection and the immortality of the soul.

[66] In the East there are examples of lay men and women as saints, for example, in the desert literature in which a monk enquires who is greater than he in asceticism, only to be shown examples of laypeople (see e.g. Paphnutius, in the *Historia monachorum* 14; *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, ed. André-Jean Festugière, [Brussels, 1971], pp. 102–09), or the many lay saints in John of Ephesus' *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (ed. and trans. Edward W. Brooks, *John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints. Syriac Text*, 3 parts, Patrologia Orientalis 17.1 [Paris, 1923]; 18.4 [Paris, 1924]; 19.2 [Paris, 1926]) or the charitable associations of laypeople such as the *philoponi*, the *spoudaioi*, and *synoikiai*. Such groups and perceptions are not evident in the West.

around one third of them, we are told no personal details. Gregory concedes that saints may have flaws of which they still need to be purged—for example, one displayed an uncontrolled and inappropriate disposition to hilarity, and another sided with the wrong contender for the papacy in the Laurentian schism[67]—but despite such imperfections they could still be vessels of divine intervention. Aside from this trait, the actors of the *Dialogi* are possessed of the same virtues and gifts as other saints, and they perform the same range of miracles. Gregory depicts groups of nuns, but only three women might be included in the ranks of his saints: Scholastica, the sister of Benedict, one of his aunts, and Galla, who once widowed, refused to remarry.[68] While there is an occasional attempt to redeem captives or to warn a brutal and unjust ruler, and while they display a seemly concern for the poor, they are not "holy men" in Peter Brown's sense, and neither are they supernatural intercessors.[69] Their sphere of action is local.

On this showing, it is difficult to conclude that in the *Dialogi* Gregory was primarily interested in a cult of saints, whether Italians or any others. Given that he was not averse to manipulating stories taken from available sources, and as his audience would arguably not have taken offence at fiction painted as fact, he could easily have ascribed invented stories even to more familiar Italian saints; yet with one or two exceptions, he did not do so. The *Dialogi* recount stories about saints because the lives of saints illustrate the highest form of the Christian life, and because through such stories Gregory is able to instruct his audience in the pursuit of virtue and, ultimately, preparation for death.

Conclusion

The foregoing survey offers an initial approach to the *Dialogi* and indicates a number of critical questions. Further examination of the text would certainly detect additional examples of the themes which have been mentioned and details of its structure. Gregory's literary technique

[67] *Dial.* 3.14.10–11; 4.42.1–3.

[68] *Dial.* 2.33.2–34.2; 4.17; 4.14.

[69] See Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80–101; idem, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981).

is as complex as would be expected from any classically educated author.[70] The *Dialogi* should also be more broadly situated within the literary context of Late Antique hagiography, and the sources of each of the stories, where they exist, need to be itemized and their adaptation analysed. The interpretation of the *Dialogi* continues to be determined by the assumptions which we make about what Gregory would or would not have done. I have shown here that a substantial number of his stories are obvious adaptations of biblical narratives or borrowings from other hagiographical texts, which suggests that, while Gregory may also have recounted episodes which he had indeed been told over a period of many years, it cannot be assumed that the *Dialogi* in their entirety are a record of such reports. The text is also a valuable source for monastic and social history, as well as for aspects of medieval Christianity.

[70] Tateo, "La struttura dei dialoghi di Gregorio Magno," esp. pp. 109–27, discusses examples of Gregory's style.

PART 3

LITERARY ASPECTS OF GREGORY'S WORKS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

GREGORY'S LITERARY INHERITANCE

John Moorhead

Gregory the Great can give the impression of standing at a vast distance from traditional Roman culture.[1] His world view is overwhelmingly Christian, his inevitable point of reference the Bible, and his works religious in origin and content. He seems to have turned his back on the ancient world; not surprisingly, a story was told in the 12th century that he had had non-Christian books burned, so that the Bible would be more carefully studied.[2] Yet the 6th century had begun in Rome with the enormous intellectual labours of Boethius, deeply rooted in the traditions of Greek and Latin thought and carried out in a climate which saw the works of Virgil and other standard authors being copied. Such concerns continued for some way into the century. In 534 Securus Melior Felix, prefect of the city of Rome, prepared an edition of the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, a storehouse of classical knowledge based on the seven liberal arts written in Africa by Martianus Capella during the 5th century; this figure is presumably identical with the orator named Felix who helped the former consul Vettius Agorius Basilius Mavortius edit Horace.[3] Cassiodorus complained that the study of secular works was prospering, while public teachers of the Scriptures were lacking, so that he and Pope Agapetus

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[1] Among discussions of this topic, I have learned most from Sofia Boesch Gajano, *Grégoire le grand*, trans. J. Martin-Bagnauder and N. Lucas (Paris, 2007), pp. 25–31; Claude Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand. Culture et expérience chrétiennes* (Paris, 1977), pp. 16–20, and the same author's "Grégoire le Grand et la culture. De la *sapientia huius mundi* à la *docta ignorantia*," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 14 (1968), 17–26; Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 34–40; Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West*, trans. John J. Contreni (Columbia SC, 1976), pp. 152–57.

[2] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 2.26, 8.19 (CCCM 118/1:146, CCCM 118/2:370–71); such legends are discussed by Gregory T. Buddensieg, "Gregory the Great, the Destroyer of Pagan Idols. The History of a Medieval Legend concerning the Decline of Ancient Art and Literature," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965), 44–65. Burnings of non-Christian books did occur in the 6th century, but in Constantinople: John Malalas, *Chronographia* 491, trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys et al. (Melbourne, 1986), p. 300. A story was later told that when famine struck Rome after Gregory's death, his enemies began to burn the books he had written: John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii*, 4.69 (PL 75:221–22).

[3] Martianus Capella (ed. James Willis [Leipzig, 1983], p. vi).

(535–36) sought to raise funds to deal with this problem, and at about that time one Maximianus represented himself as having been in his youth an orator known throughout the world and a poet.[4] But there the trail stops, for a reason all too clear.

In 536 the Gothic war launched by Justinian came to mainland Italy, where it continued to devastating effect for some two decades. During its course Rome was captured five times and, at its lowest ebb, stood uninhabited for forty days; the senatorial estates that tended to be concentrated in the south of mainland Italy and had supplied the material support for the pursuits of the learned class were largely destroyed; and the class of high bureaucrats whose formation had relied on the traditional literary education amply displayed in the letters of Cassiodorus, came to lose its function as society became dominated by generals and bishops. The changed circumstances entailed a catastrophic decline in literary studies.

Gregory was born during this period of rapid change, probably around 540. In 554 the Pragmatic Constitution that the Emperor Justinian issued to regulate the life of the newly conquered Italy ordered that *annonae* were to be paid to grammarians and orators, so that young men educated in the liberal arts would flourish in his empire.[5] We do not know whether this legislation had practical import in Rome, and in any case Gregory may have been too old by then to have taken advantage of such instruction. Letters may have fared better outside Rome. The poet Venantius Fortunatus, who seems to have been a few years older than Gregory, had been educated at Ravenna, and the poems he went on to write while in Gaul show how much classical poetry he absorbed; but Ravenna was a government town, and escaped the worst of the war.[6] By the middle of the 6th century, Constantinople had become the centre of Latin culture, to which it is reasonable to suppose that Gregory had access during his stay there (*c.*580–*c.*586) and, on returning to Rome, he kept in touch with people he knew there. One of them, Rusticiana, is of particular interest. A holder of the rank of *patricia* who held property in Italy and Sicily, she was close to Gregory, who wrote inviting her to visit Rome again.[7] She

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[4] Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, 1 *praef.* 1 (ed. R.A.B. Mynors [Oxford, 1937], p. 3). Maximianus: *Elegiae* 1.9ff. (ed. Aemilius Baehrens, *Poetae Latinae Minores* 5 [Leipzig, 1883], p. 317).

[5] *Prag. Sanct. app.* 7.22 (ed. R. Schöll, *Corpus iuris civilis* 3 [Berlin, 1912], p. 302).

[6] Michael Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow. The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus* (Ann Arbor MI, 2009).

[7] Property: *Reg.* 9.84, 13.24. Visit Rome again: Gregory hopes she will see St. Peter's again (*Reg.* 8.22); he mentions her "return" towards the end of 13.24. Her sending Gregory gold for the redemption of captives (*Reg.* 8.22) and gifts to the monastery he founded (*Reg.* 11.26)

shared her name with the widow of Boethius, who was still in Rome in 546, begging for bread.[8] Gregory's friendship with her may have been a literary one, and have begun when Rusticiana was still living in Rome; conceivably for years he close to a near relative of Boethius.

But apart from the issue of what secular culture his education in Rome and years in Constantinople may have placed at Gregory's disposal, there is the question of what such culture would have meant to him. Two predecessors in 6th-century Italy offered different approaches. One was provided by one of Gregory's heroes, the monk Benedict. In a passage of the *Dialogues* worded with typical exuberance, Gregory describes the young Benedict living freely (*libere*) in the land, but coming to despise the world. Born to a free family (*liberiore genere*), he went to Rome for an education in liberal studies in letters (*liberalibus litterarum studiis*) but, coming to despise the study of letters (*despectis... literarum studiis*), he went on to withdraw, having become knowledgeably ignorant and wisely unlearned (*scienter nescius et sapienter indoctus*).[9] One is tempted to see here a statement of Gregory's values rather than Benedict's, but judging by the Latinity of the *Regula Benedicti*, Gregory's judgement was not overly critical, and while the Rule of Benedict enjoins on monks the practice of divine reading (*lectio divina*), its requirement that every monk receive a book from the library at the beginning of Lent which he was "to read through in order" suggests a low priority being given to intellectual work.[10] Romantic notions that have sometimes been entertained of Benedictine monks lovingly transcribing and preserving the classics find no support in Benedict himself.

Cassiodorus, on the other hand, was concerned that the monks of the community which he formed read both divine and secular texts, and in

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suggest close friendship, as does the phrase used with reference to her, "cuius susceptus ante episcopatum proprius fui" (*Reg.* 11.26, CCSL 140A: 898, l. 8); see further, Roberta Rizzo, *Papa Gregorio Magno e la nobilità in Sicilia* (Palermo, 2008), p. 18, although she is too ready to see signs of Gregory having been affiliated with the Anicii gens.

[8] Procopius, *History of the Wars*, 7.20.27–31 (ed. and trans. H.B. Dewing, *Procopius*, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge MA, 1924], p. 332.

[9] *Dial.* 2, *praef.* At *Dial.* 3.37.20 Gregory proposes a comparison between *hac nostra indocta scientia* and the *doctam ignorantiam* of an illiterate holy man; see further *Mor.* 10.29.48 for his hostility to the wisdom of this world, and the advice that wise people be admonished *ut amittant scire quae sciunt* (*RP* 3.6). Paradoxes of this kind recall those of Byzantine liturgical poetry, such as occur in the *Akathistos*.

[10] *Lectio divina*: *Benedicti Regula* 48.1 (CSEL 75:125); following portions in this chapter indicate hours each day in which monks were free for reading. Book in Lent: *Benedicti Regula* 48.15–16 (CSEL 75:129).

his *Institutes* he has a fair bit to say about copying such texts. But even here, secular learning was not seen as autonomous, but rather as something one engaged in so as to understand the Scriptures better. While we have little information as to the kind of monastic life observed in the monastery Gregory established on the Caelian Hill, in this respect he gives every impression of standing closer to Benedict than Cassiodorus. Further, both Benedict and Gregory seem to have approached the Bible as a text one heard rather than read, whereas Cassiodorus was concerned with the needs of those who read texts in silence.[11] Gregory certainly treated the Bible as a text he knew in his mind, rather than consulted on the page, and whatever use he made of secular texts may well have been based on his memories of earlier reading, with implications for the accuracy of his recollections. In the enquiry that follows, I begin by examining two utterances that seem to suggest a negative view of literary culture. I then enquire, as precisely as possible, into what Gregory may have known of classical literary culture, restricting myself to what would have been available to him in Latin; his knowledge of Greek seems to have been scanty, and the parallels with Latin authors that occur within his works, while often oblique, are far closer to any parallels with Greek authors. Finally, and very briefly, I seek to place some of the broad themes of his activity against those of his period.

Gregory is famous for two utterances that suggest a dour view of non-Christian culture, of which the first is the more complicated. It occurs towards the end of a long letter he wrote to bishop Leander of Seville in 595 that accompanied a copy of his *Moralia in Iob*. In what can be read as a frontal attack on correct Latin, Gregory informed Leander that he disdained to observe the art of speaking that the teachings of an exterior discipline recommended, having in mind teaching exterior to Christianity. As would be clear from the style of the letter he was writing, he did not avoid the collision of metacisms and the confusion of barbarism; moreover, he was not in the slightest concerned with "syntax and moods and the cases taken by prepositions", for it would have been utterly unworthy to bind the words of the Bible with the rules of Donatus, which in any

[11] Benedict: John Moorhead, "Hearing in St. Benedict," *Studia monastica* 47 (2005), 7–17. Gregory: John Moorhead, *Gregory the Great* (Abingdon—New York, 2005), pp. 22–23. Cassiodorus: John Moorhead, "Hearers and Readers of Christian Texts in Late Antiquity," in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 14, ed. Carl Deroux (Brussels, 2008), pp. 476–97 at 496–97.

case, Gregory claimed, had not been followed by any interpreters of the authority of the Bible.[12]

These are alarming words, not made any easier by the pride that the great biblical commentator Jerome had taken in having been a student of the grammarian Donatus,[13] but they are not meant to be taken at face value. The technical vocabulary he used suggests, at the very least, that the enemy was one Gregory was well acquainted with. Metacism refers to the disappearance of the letter *m* between two vowels, as for example could occur whenever the accusative singular form of most nouns was followed by a word beginning with a vowel. By Gregory's time, such an *m* at the end of a word was probably not pronounced. Donatus includes the fault in a list of barbarisms, but the example Martianus Capella gives of this awkward usage is certainly meant as a joke (*mammam ipsam amo quam meam animam*: "I love that breast more than my life"), and we may suspect that the failing was not always taken seriously.[14] Similarly, references in late antique texts to barbarisms of speech are sometimes meant in a jocular way.[15] Moreover, it has long been recognized that Gregory's words in this passage are related to some written by Cassiodorus in his *Institutes*.[16] Addressing himself a few decades earlier to people charged

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[12] *Reg.* 5.53a (CCSL 143:7, l. 215–23). I have benefitted from the translation of John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great* (Toronto, 2004), 2:385, from which the quoted words are taken.

[13] *Praeceptoris mei Donati: Apologia contra Rufinum* 1.16 (CCSL 79:15).

[14] Donatus: H. Keil, *Grammatici Latini* 4 (Leipzig, 1864), p. 393. Martianus Capella, 5.5.14; (eds A. Dick and J. Préuax [Stuttgart, 1978], p. 254). One cannot imagine Gregory making a joke of this kind.

[15] "Te praesente formidet linguae suae facere barbarus barbarismum": Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 5.5.3 to Syagrius (ed. W.B. Anderson [London, 1965], p. 182).

[16] Similarities had already been noticed by Maurice Roger, *L'enseignement des lettres classiques d'Ausone à Alcuin: Introduction à l'histoire des écoles carolingiennes* (Paris, 1905), p. 188. The key study is Louis Holtz, "Le context grammatical du défi à la grammaire: Grégoire et Cassiodore," in *Grégoire le grand* (Paris, 1986), pp. 531–40, arguing for complex intertexuality and malice in the way Gregory dealt with Cassiodorus; gentler is Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces* (Stockholm, 1964), p. 167, suggesting that bad memory or mistaken quotation, always on the cards with Gregory, may have been at issue. See further on the interpretation of this letter, Ubaldo Pizzani, "S. Gregorio magno, Cassiodoro e le arti liberali," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo* (Rome, 1991), 2:121–36. The question is complicated by uncertainty as to the text of Cassiodorus that would have been available to Gregory; see Holtz's discussion, "Quelques aspects de la tradition et de la diffusion des *Institutiones*," in *Flavio Magno Aurelio Cassiodoro* (Rubbettino, 1986), pp. 281–312, and further the somewhat diffuse study of Fabio Troncarelli, *Vivarium: I libri, il destino* (Turnhout, 1998); more recently, Mark Vessey, in *Cassiodorus: Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning*, trans. James W. Halporn, intro. Mark Vessey (Liverpool, 2004), pp. 39ff. F. Weissengruber, "Zu Gregors des Großen Verhalten gegenüber der antiken Profanbildung," in *Gregorio magno* 2, pp. 105–19, is generally persuasive, although a good deal of the argument rests on a

with correcting errors found in manuscripts of the Scriptures, Cassiodorus told them to pay special attention to words in the accusative or ablative cases, distinguishing between the states of rest and motion (*situm motumque*) that were associated with these cases respectively in nouns governed by prepositions; among other things, they were to be on their guard against the letter *m* dropping out or being added at the ends of words, a clear sign of uncertainty as to its pronunciation in this position.[17] Gregory may have changed one word: while *situs* remains the same, Cassiodorus' *motus* seems to have become *modus*.[18] Assuming that Gregory has replaced one word by another, whether intentionally or not, the new word works equally well, for Quintilian used it of the voice of verbs, whether active or passive, and of confusion in the use of deponent verbs.[19]

The clinching argument for not taking Gregory's words at face value is the obvious one. Despite his assertion to the contrary, throughout his letter to Leander, the *Moralia*, and every other book written by Gregory, there is no sign of him committing such schoolboy errors as confusing cases after prepositions; his Latin is of a very different quality to that of Benedict. Perhaps, in a period when spoken Latin was diverging from the traditional form in which authors such as Gregory wrote it, the distinction between the accusative and ablative forms of some nouns would have been blurred in pronunciation, but when it came to writing them he was as correct as Cicero. In the following century, the English author Aldhelm claimed that he had avoided the Scylla of solecism, the Charybdis of colloquialism, the rocks of labdacism and the whirlpools of metacism; he may have been deliberately imitating Gregory's words to Leander, but in any case Aldhelm, like Gregory an accomplished Latin stylist, was operating in a rhetorical manner similar to that of Gregory.[20] Writing a few decades after Gregory had sent a copy of the *Moralia* to his brother, Isidore of Seville asserted that it would be beyond the power of wise people to explain the verbal ornaments contained in the *Moralia*, a judgement

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passage in the *In I Librum Regum* attributed to Gregory that I would prefer not to take as a guide to his thought.

[17] Cassiodorus, *Institutiones* 1.15.9, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1937), p. 46. Very helpful is the translation of Halporn, *Cassiodorus: Institutions*, p. 142.

[18] Note, however, that *motus* is a possible reading; consult the critical apparatus provided by Adriaen (CCSL 143:7, at l. 219), and compare Paul Ewald and Ludwig M. Hartmann (eds), MGH Epp. 1:357 n. (f).

[19] Quintilian, *Institutiones* 9.3.7 (ed. Michael Winterbottom [Oxford, 1970], p. 513).

[20] Aldhelm, *De virginitate* 59 (MGH AA 15:320–21.)

that may be closer to the truth than that which Gregory ostensibly passed on himself.[21]

It is also worth considering the place in which Gregory expressed these sentiments. It was conventional for an author to deploy a *topos* of humility in a dedicatory letter by drawing attention to his incompetence, and the comments we have been considering seem undercut by a passage that occurs immediately prior to them in which Gregory apologized to Leander in case his correspondent found anything uncouth (*incultum*) in the *Moralia*, and claimed he had not been able to increase his studies of rhetoric because of illness.[22] His remarks were made in the same spirit as those of another formidable stylist, Sidonius Apollinaris, himself a bishop and in this case addressing another bishop, when he apologized for the lack of literary style in a homily he forwarded to him.[23] This is not the only instance we shall find of Gregory's "sense of ironic self-deprecation", which enables his words to Leander to be seen as "an ironic joke between two cultured friends".[24] Similar self-deprecating sentiments are visible in the letter sent to bishop Marinianus of Ravenna which stands before the *Homilies on Ezekiel* and that addressed to bishop John of Ravenna at the end of the *Pastoral Care*,[25] but we have particular reason to be sceptical of the apparent modesty in the letter to Leander. As he came to the end of the *Moralia*, Gregory confessed that "somehow or other a desire for human praise has furtively, I do not know how, planted itself in the middle of that very desire with which I am so keen to please God",[26] and we may hazard a guess that a form of pride lay behind his profession of modesty.

The second passage we shall consider was written six years later to another bishop among Gregory's familiar correspondents, Desiderius of Vienne. Having begun by stating that he had heard good things of the bishop's studies, Gregory proceeded to write of his amazement and

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[21] Isidore writes of the *Moralia*: "quanta clareant ornamenta verborum, nemo sapiens explicare valebit etiam si omnes artus eius vertantur in linguas": *De viris illustribus* 40.54 (PL 83:1102).

[22] *Reg.* 5.53a.5, ll. 186–89. Yet a few years later Gregory wrote to a hermit of his pleasure in finding no *cultus* of eloquence or prideful use of language in a letter from him (*Reg.* 9.148). See in general, Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces*; Gregory is discussed at pp. 162–67.

[23] *Ep.* 7.9.1–2, ed. W.B. Anderson, 2 (London 1965), p. 336.

[24] Self-deprecation: Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), p. 142. Ironic joke: John R.C. Martyn, "Four Notes on the *Registrum* of Gregory the Great," *Parergon* 19/2 (2002), 6–38 at 9.

[25] *HeZ., praef.*; *RP* 4, p. 540.

[26] *Mor.* 35.20.47, trans. Moorhead, *Gregory the Great*, p. 156. The conclusion of the *Moralia* is one of the most beautiful and self-aware pieces of Gregory's writing.

sadness at hearing that the bishop was teaching grammar, for the praises of Christ did not belong in the one mouth with the praises of Jupiter, and he urged his correspondent to consider how serious and unspeakable it would be for a bishop to sing something that was unsuitable for a religious layperson. Gregory had heard from a priest that Desiderius was innocent; if the bishop had not been studying pieces of nonsense and secular writing, Gregory thanked God for having kept his heart free from being defiled by the blasphemous utterances of unspeakable people.[27]

It cannot be denied that this is not a particularly positive passage, the effect of which is heightened by the repetition of one of Gregory's favourite words, "unspeakable" (*nefandissimum*). Nevertheless, it is awkward. Its opening words suggest that, in principle, Gregory was happy with bishops undertaking "studies" (*studia*), a sentiment that would be congruent with the defensive statement in his letter to Leander that ill health had made his own rhetorical studies languish, so he could hardly have opposed a brother bishop's being engaged in such activities.[28] Perhaps his criticism was not of bishops engaging in studies, but their teaching grammar, an activity he describes in what looks like formal language (*grammaticam ... exponere*), and it is worth remembering that the discipline of grammar included the study of poetry; it may have been this, rather than what we now think of as grammar, that Gregory was concerned with.[29] Yet Gregory seems to change direction midstream, for he proceeds to express optimism that Desiderius may not be studying (*studere*) trifles and secular letters. Hence, a positive interpretation of the letter would see Gregory merely forbidding a bishop to teach grammar, something perhaps compromised by the study of poetry this necessitated; a negative reading, on the other hand, would see Gregory condemn even private study. Needless to say, there had been a long tradition of polemic against such study, Jerome having written to Pope Damasus of clergy reading comedies, singing the amorous lyrics of bucolic verses, and holding copies of Virgil. It has been suggested that an awareness of an incompatibility between profane and Christian culture

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[27] *Reg.* 11.34. Gregory's aversion to the praise of Jupiter presumably arose from knowledge of the activities attributed to him; cf *Aen.* 1.46f, and Gregory of Tours' reference to "Iovis omnium stuprorum spurcissimus perpetrator": *HF* 2.29 (MGH SSRM 1:74).

[28] "Nam dum molestia corpus atteritur, afflicta mente etiam dicendi studia languescunt" (*Ep.* 5.53a.5, CCSL 143:6, ll. 187–89).

[29] Cicero, *De Divinatione* 1.51.116 (ed. W.A. Falconer [London, 1923], p. 348); Quintillian, *Institutiones* 1.4.2 (ed. Winterbottom, p. 22).

had developed during the 5th century, particularly among bishops,[30] and Gregory's attitude would find a place within it.

On the basis of the evidence of these letters, Gregory emerges as not having been as hostile to secular letters as he may first appear to have been, and indeed elsewhere he gives evidence of operating according to principles very different to those a hasty reading of his letters to Leander and Desiderius may suggest. In the prologue to his *Dialogues*, he wrote that if he had reproduced the words used by his informants, such a turning of the pen of the writer to "rustic use" would not have been fitting.[31] As so often with Gregory, a moral judgement may underlie one ostensibly made on other grounds, here stylistic, and the notion of rusticity carries a note of criticism, as when he has the malevolent enemies of a preacher ask the pope, "Who is this rustic?"[32] He shared this particular concern with Quintilian, according to whom one's utterance should be smooth, distinct, agreeable, and urbane, so that nothing rustic or exotic could be heard in it.[33] Such fastidiousness, which Gregory also expressed in an aversion to "vulgar" words,[34] contrasts with the attitude of his contemporary Gregory

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[30] *Ep.* 21 (*Lettres*, ed. J. Labourt, 2 vols [Paris, 1949], 1:94); in the preceding passage, Jerome interprets Paul as discouraging the reading of philosophers, orators, and poets. The argument for a perception of incompatibility is made by Riché, *Education and Culture*, pp. 95–99; I am not sure what significance to place on an article in the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua* of the second half of the 5th century; "Ut episcopus gentilium libros non legat, haereticum autem pro necessitate temporis", quoted p. 97 n. 115; something similar has been attributed to the fourth council of Carthage (398): *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova amplissima collectio* (ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi, 14 vols [Florence, 1759–71; repr. Graz, 1960–61] 3:952). But the suggestion that Ennodius must have known the canon is not well grounded, for the passages quoted, like all his surviving works, come from the period of his diaconate; a case could be made on the negative ground that none of his surviving works date from the period of his episcopate, perhaps suggesting that on becoming a bishop he turned aside from literary culture.

[31] *Dial.* 1 *prol.* 10 (*rusticano usu*); when Gregory states that for some of his informants he has given the sense of what they say, for others their words with the sense, he deploys standard terms used by Jerome (*sensus, verbum*) of translating from one language to another in a manner that suggests that some of what Gregory's informants told him needed to be "translated"! See in general Michel Banniard, *Viva voce: communication écrite et communication orale du IVe au IXe siècle en occident Latin* (Paris, 1992).

[32] *Dial.* 1.4.11. Note too the hostile portrayal of a *rusticus* who heard things *in mente rusticana* at *Dial.* 1.5.4–6; *ab stulto rusticorum populo* (2.8.10); an evil sacristan was said to have used the "rustic word" *inpostor* of a holy bishop (3.14.3). *Rustici* appear in a good light at 3.27. Elsewhere in the Dialogues, Gregory seems apologetic at providing a rustic form for a place name (1.12.1); the mention of a place name in *lingua rustica* in a sermon to the people is without awkwardness (*HEv.* 12.7).

[33] "Facile, explanatum, iucundum, urbanum id est in qua nulla neque rusticitas neque peregrinitas resonet": *Institutiones* 11.3.30 (ed. Winterbottom, p. 659).

[34] Hence his flagging the words *merola* and *flascones* as *vulgo*: (*Dial.* 2.2.1, 2.18.1).

of Tours, who seems to have worn the label 'rustic' as a badge of honour. In the preface to his *Books of Histories*, he observes that few people understand a rhetor as he philosophizes, but many a rustic as he speaks, clearly placing himself in the latter category. At the beginning of his book on the glory of the confessors, he imagines educated people saying to him "O rustic and ignorant person, why do you place your name among the writers?" And while the confession Gregory of Tours made at the beginning of another of his works that he did not know how to decline (*discernere*) nouns, used feminine for masculine, neuter for feminine, and masculine for neuter, and confused the accusative and ablative cases in nouns governed by prepositions was all too justified, a similar profession by Pope Gregory, cast in much more elegant language, was, as we have seen, false.[35] Gregory of Tours felt that Gregory the Great's education in grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric meant that he was considered second to none in Rome;[36] he may not have been told that this was so, but to such a person the pope would have seemed a man of impressive literary culture.

With this in mind, we may turn to the occasions when Gregory himself quotes from classical authors. Two phrases he uses, one from Virgil and the other from Cicero, had become clichés, as they remain to this day; they may have been recollections from his early days, and one recalls Augustine's remark that children were exposed to Virgil at an early age so that he would not easily be forgotten, or they may have come to his mind as nothing more than phrases of no particular provenance familiar to educated people.[37] Two passages in the prologue to the *Dialogues*, how-

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[35] Few people understand a rhetor: Gregory of Tours, *HF praef*; Gregory asserts that in contemporary Gaul "nec repperire posit quisquam peritus dialectica in arte grammaticus": *HF praef. prima* (MGH SSRM 1:1). Rustic and ignorant person: *Liber in gloria confessorum praef.* (MGH SSRM 1,2:298), where his inability to decline nouns is mentioned.

[36] Gregory of Tours, *HF* 10.1 (MGH SSRM 1:478), apparently followed by Paul the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* 2 (PL 75:42), whose perception that such study was still (*adhuc*) flourishing then is interesting. But neither Gregory nor Paul need have had definite information, still less the Carolingian author John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* 2.13 (PL 75:92).

[37] This is particularly the case with *auri sacra fames* (*Aen.* 3.57) quoted in *Reg.* 11.40, a letter to Bishop Aetherius of Gaul dealing with the problem of simony; oddly enough, the same phrase occurs independently in a law of 469 dealing with the same issue (*Codex Iustinianus*, 1.3.30, ed. Paul Krueger [Berlin, 1915], p. 22), but it had surely become a cliché; the historian Jordanes, no great scholar, used it (*Getica* 134, ed. MGH AA 5,1: 93); Gregory's use of Virgil may be set against that impressive deployment of him by Ambrose: M.D. Diederich, *Virgil in the Works of St. Ambrose* (Washington DC, 1931). Augustine mentions children learning Virgil at *De civ. Dei* 1.3 (CCSL 47:3). Note as well the phrase *o tempora, o mores*! (used several times by Cicero) in a letter to the emperor Maurice, *Reg.* 5.37, but again, this is nothing compared to Ambrose's use of Cicero in his *De officiis*. This listing is tentative; anyone who has tried to establish Gregory's use of the

ever, cut far more deeply, and are most suggestive. Gregory was a lover of contemplative solitude, and at the beginning of his *Dialogues* he tells of an occasion when, weighed down by the tumults of people of the world, he sought out a secret place (*secretum locum petii*) that was favourable to a feeling of sorrow (*Dial.* 1, *prol.* 1). He used a very similar expression in a letter to the bishop of Constantinople, a correspondent from whom he could have expected some sympathy, writing that on ascending to high office he had been aware of his weakness and had sought out secret places (*secretiora loca petere*; *Ep.* 7.5). Again, in a homily on Ezekiel, Gregory told his hearers that those who disapproved of the lives of their neighbours tried to change their place and choose a more remote life in secret (*mutare locum conamur, secretum vitae remotioris eligere*; *HEz.* 1.9.23). The expression was clearly a favourite with Gregory, and one with a classical pedigree, having been used by Horace (*secreta petit loca*) and Livy, who wrote of a commander seeking a position from which he could launch a surprise attack (*locum maxime secretum ab tumultu petit*).[38] Perhaps the form of words was in the air, rather than a conscious imitation by Gregory, although if it were the latter we may hazard the guess that Livy is the more likely source. This would be something of a surprise, for patristic authors tended to take little interest in Livy, turning for preference among historians to the moralizing Sallust. But one circumstance suggests that Gregory may have drawn directly on Livy. In the first of the passages quoted here, Gregory speaks of himself as having been weighed down by tumults, just as Livy writes of a place remote from tumult. The occurrence of this word in both authors suggests direct borrowing.

Another metaphor that could be used to describe a deeply felt experience came easily to Gregory. He loved to compare his situation to that of a person at sea, tossed about in the waves of a great storm and hardly able to see the harbour from which he had departed (*Dial.* 1, *prol.* 5). The same notion occurs in some of his letters, where he describes himself as shaken by waves of things he had to deal with and oppressed by storms (*Ep* 1.5 to Theoctista, the sister of the emperor) and, again, shaken by waves and afflicted by the storms of a confused life.[39] Elsewhere, Gregory writes to his old friend Bishop Leander that, shaken as he is by great waves crashing

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Fathers will have encountered difficulties arising from his tendency to be free rather than literal in quoting them.

[38] Horace: *Ars poetica* 298 (ed. D.R. Shackleton Bailey [Stuttgart, 1991], p. 322). Livy: *Ab urbe condita* 4.278 (ed. R.G. Ogilvie [Oxford, 1974], p. 277).

[39] *Reg.* 1.5 (CCSL 140:6); 1.7 (CCSL 140:9); and 1.25 (CCSL 140:31).

in from every side, he is unable to direct his ship towards the harbour (*Ep.* 1.41, where the metaphor is extended at length). Less precise are the shipwreck he informs Bishop John of Constantinople is threatening him (1.4), a fleeting reference to the storms of the times at the conclusion of a letter to Bishop Natalis of Salona (1.20), and the image of a ship having to return to harbour in a letter to the ex-prefect Aristobulus (1.28). A beautiful working out of the image occurs in the letter to Leander that forms the preface to the *Moralia*, when Gregory writes of the monks who had accompanied him to Constantinople making it possible for him, tossed about as he was because of secular issues, to be tied firmly to the peaceful shore of prayer, and to flee to their company as to a bosom of the safest of harbours (*Ep.* 5.53a.1). He uses similar language to describe a real storm encountered by the bishop of Palermo and a sailor while on their way to Rome, from which the latter was only delivered by the bishop's having the holy sacrifice celebrated (*Dial.* 4.59.2–5).

Where did this notion come from? On another occasion, when he describes himself as escaping from a shipwreck naked, Gregory recycles a metaphor used in a very similar way by Paulinus of Nola, and it is possible that he took it directly from him.[40] But the broad metaphor of a peaceful harbour was an ancient one that remained current among Christian writers.[41] Not long before Gregory's time it had been used by Cassiodorus when, at the beginning of the preface to his *De anima*, he wrote of his peace after finishing work on the *Variae*, his correspondence written on behalf of the Ostrogothic state: a quiet harbour had received him after he had been tossed about as he composed its twelve books.[42] And somewhere in the background to Gregory's language stands Virgil's account of a storm that had been raised at Juno's behest to impede the passage of Aeneas and his followers (*Aen.* 1.81–123), but exact parallels are lacking, and Courcelle well expresses the relationship between Gregory and Virgil here when he states that at one point Gregory seems to be dreaming of the storm in the Aeneid; I am not certain we can be more precise than this.[43]

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[40] "De hoc mundo quasi de naufragio nudus evadam" (Paulinus, *Ep.* 4.3; PL 61:166); "ex huius vitae naufragio nudus evasi" (Gregory, *Ep.* 5.53a.1).

[41] C. Bonner, "Desired Haven," *Harvard Theological Review* 34 (1941), 50–67 discusses usages of λιμήν and *portus*, without showing them being applied by an author to his own situation as Gregory does to his.

[42] *De anima* 1 (CCSL 96:534, ll. 2–3).

[43] Pierre Courcelle, *Lecteurs païens et chrétiens de l'Énéide* (Paris, 1984), p. 45. Another "dream", of *Aen.* 12.862–66, is said to have inspired "parva avis... faciem... importune" at *Dial.* 2.2.1; Courcelle, *Lecteurs* p. 698 n. 102–3.

Sometimes, however, Gregory can be pinned down. Writing in October 590 to Narses, Gregory claimed that his correspondent had called someone who was really an ape a lion, but for his part he felt that that this was like referring to scabby young dogs as panthers or tigers. A similar image occurs in abbreviated form in the immediately preceding letter, sent by Gregory to the emperor's sister Theoctista in October 590, in which he commented that, in ordering him to assume pontifical office, the emperor had ordered an ape to become a lion; but while he could order an ape to be called a lion, he could not order him to become one. Certainly in the first case, and probably in the second, Gregory will have had in mind a passage in Juvenal's *Satires* which refers to lazy dogs given the ironic names Panther, Tiger or Lion.[44] Writing to the patrician Venantius, whom he believed to have been influenced to do wrong by his friends, he produces an apposite comment from Seneca, rather coyly described as a secular author: "You should discuss everything with your friends, but first [assess the men] themselves."[45] It has been suggested that two of the best known parts of the *Aeneid* were drawn on by Gregory, the description of the fall of Troy in the second book having been used to supply language for the impact of the Lombards on Rome and, more compellingly, the account of the underworld in the sixth book for language to describe what a Christian visitor to the same region saw.[46] A brief mention in the *Moralia* of

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[44] Gregory to Narses: *Reg.* 1.6 (CCSL 140: 8). Gregory to Theoctista: *Reg.* 1.5 (CCSL 140:7). Juvenal: *Sat.* 8.34–37 (ed. and trans. Susanna Morton Braund [Cambridge MA, 2004], p. 326). These matters are very helpfully discussed by Pierre Courcelle, "Grégoire le grand à l'école de Juvénal," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 38 (1967), 170–74. However, I am not persuaded by the argument Courcelle develops for Gregory's use of the phrases *habitare secum* and *secum esse* in *Dial.* 2.3.5–9 being based on Persius' *tecum habita* (Sat. 4.52): "'Habitare secum' selon Perse et selon Grégoire le grand," *Revue des études anciennes* 69 (1967), 266–79; while the sentiment is certainly classical, this way of expressing it could have occurred to Gregory independently. Further discussion in the commentary of Salvatore Pricoco to Manlio Simonetti's edition of the *Dialogi*: *Gregorio Magno. Storie di santi e di diavoli*, 1: *Libri I–II* (Rome, 2005), pp. 313–14.

[45] "cum amicis omnia tractanda sunt, sed prius de ipsis": Gregory, *Reg.* 1.33; cf. "tu vero omnia cum amico delibera, sed de ipso prius", Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales* 1.3.2 (ed. Leighton D. Reynolds, vol. 1 [Oxford, 1965], p. 4).

[46] Lombards: compare Gregory's "ubique mors, ubique luctus" (*HEz.* 2.6.22) with Virgil's "luctus, ubique pavor et plurima mortis imago" (*Aen.* 2.369). Underworld: Gregory's "amoena erant prata atque virentia, odoriferis herbarum floribus exornata" appositely brings together phrases from *Aeneid* 6.638, 656–58, 708: Courcelle, *Lecteurs*, p. 467 n. 163. Courcelle convincingly connects Gregory's *noctem insomnem duceret* (*HEv.* 2.26.11) with *Aen.* 9.166–67 (*noctem custodia ducit insomnem*), p. 619, but I am not persuaded that *multa viri virtus* (*Aen.* 4.3) lies behind Gregory's *viri virtute* (*Dial.* 2.16.9) and *tantae virtutis virum* (*Dial.* 3.35.3), suggested at p. 282 n. 6, such expressions being very Gregorian.

the habits of hinds when swimming follows Pliny,[47] and the same work contains a brief allusion to the story of Atlas, when Gregory acknowledges the vain fables of Hesiod, Aratus and Callimachus.[48]

It must be said that this is not a great harvest. The works of Gregory yield nothing like the long lists of quotations of and allusions to classical authors that accompany those of Ambrose and Augustine; still less is there a sense of wrestling with ideas that were to be taken seriously and needed intellectual engagement. But perhaps this is not as bad as it seems. The works Gregory wrote were not of a kind where one would necessarily look for such things; there is no *De officiis* or *De civitate Dei* in his oeuvre, and the works of his predecessors on the Bible, like his own, were orally delivered performances, not products of the study, in which classical material was naturally thin on the ground. Moreover, Gregory is remarkably hard to catch in the act of reading even his Christian predecessors. He certainly knew of them, asking the dedicatee of the *Homilies on Ezekiel*, with a typical deployment of the modesty *topos* that does not conceal a possible element of pride, why he did not turn to the flowing torrents of the blessed fathers Ambrose and Augustine rather than the brackish stream his work constituted.[49] All that can safely be deduced from this is that Gregory was familiar with the names of his great predecessors, not that he had mastered their works. In this set of homilies Gregory went on to develop themes explicitly in opposition to Pelagius and Caelestius, in an account of grace and God's gifts that seems likely to have originated in a reading of Augustine but points away from his thought.[50] Given the difficulty of pinning down Gregory's debt to earlier Christian authors, something that can be very overt in the case of Ambrose, it is not surprising to find the extent of his knowledge of classical writers hard to establish.

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[47] Pliny: *capita imponentes praecedentium*, of hinds swimming across the seas (*Nat. hist.* 8.50.118, ed. H. Rockham [Cambridge MA/London, 1968], p. 84). Gregory: when crossing rivers, "capitum suorum onera dorsis praecedentium superponunt" (*Mor.* 30.10.36).

[48] *Mor.* 9.11.12, evidence that Gregory had heard the names of authors rather than for his familiarity with them.

[49] Note as well a recommendation to a correspondent in Africa to read the work of his fellow countryman Augustine on Job, whose work was white flour compared to Gregory's bran (*Reg.* 10.16), yet another case of self-deprecation. I am not sure such a comparison would occur to anyone who placed Augustine's *Adnotationes in Iob* against Gregory's *Moralia*.

[50] *HEz* 1.9.2. Another apparent failure to comprehend something on the part of Gregory is suggested by John A. Demetracopoulos, "Gregory the Great and Contemporary Byzantine Theology," in *L'eredità spirituale di Gregorio Magno tra Occidente e Oriente*, ed. Guido Innocenzo Gargano (Verona, 2005), pp. 87–138.

Yet, while the quotations and allusions are too few to suggest anything definite about how Gregory's knowledge is to be placed against the range of material that would have been potentially available to him, there are enough of them to allow some observations about how they stand within Gregory's own output.

The borrowings we have mentioned do not occur at random within Gregory's writings. In particular, those that occur in letters and give the impression of having been intended to be spotted as borrowings, rather than being habitual forms of expression date from the very beginning of his pontificate. If we take it that Gregory followed what may have been a convention that the display of classical learning was incompatible with the office of bishop, this would not have been surprising; if he found it impossible to go cold turkey at the beginning of his pontificate, nevertheless the density of allusion rapidly diminished. It is also noteworthy how many borrowings occur in letters to personal friends who were themselves important figures, letters that stand apart from many in the collection as being presumably the work of Gregory himself, suggesting that their use may have been a means of flashing signs of inclusion in an educated and literary in-group.[51] Just as with the *Variae* of Cassiodorus, many of the longest letters in Gregory's *Register* are those addressed to important people, and the purpose of such letters was to maintain social networks, in a way paralleled by the personal letters of Symmachus and Ennodius. And, just as Gregory's utterances that apparently disparage secular letters occur in correspondence with clerics, conversely a disproportionate number of his classical allusions occur in letters to laity, another sign of their being regarded as unseemly in discourse among clergy, just what one would expect from his letter to Desiderius.

Another possibility may be raised more tentatively. A surprising number of these allusions are employed to describe Gregory's own situation. Words that may be from Livy express his desire for solitude, words from Juvenal his feeling of unworthiness for office, and a very traditional metaphor persistently drawn on to convey the unwelcome turbulence to which that office made him subject. In other words, while Gregory does not seem to draw on the resources of the classical tradition for ideas it would be interesting to engage with, or to make use of it more than occasionally

[51] On the authorship of letters in the collection, Dag Norberg, "Qui a composé les lettres de saint Grégoire le Grand?" *Studi medievali* 21 (1980), 1–17, and "Style personnel et style administratif dans le *Registrum Epistularum* de saint Grégoire le grand," in *Grégoire le grand* (Paris, 1986), pp. 489–97.

to supply verbal embellishments to his prose, he persistently used it in a stylish way to make points about himself, perhaps to give them greater resonance and depth. But pursuing this point would take us into Gregory's psychology, and away from the present discussion.

Let us now turn to more general issues. Most of Gregory's works are structured around portions of the Bible, which he systematically goes through and explains, line by line: the Book of Job in the *Moralia*, the beginning and end of the Book of Ezekiel in a series of homilies, part of the Song of Songs in two homilies, and liturgical pericopes from the gospels in his *Forty Homilies*. These works share another characteristic; having originated in discourses spoken before audiences. His other works differ in both respects, but while the *Dialogues* and *Pastoral Rule* are organized along different lines, they too frequently involve exposition of the Bible. And while many of the letters sent in Gregory's name must have been written by clerks in the papal office, the longer personal ones that we may attribute to Gregory himself are peppered with biblical quotations and allusions. His preoccupations, in short, seem thoroughly biblical. Yet, while the text that was central to Gregory's concerns was outside the body of classical works, the method in which he approached it was traditional, and it will be worth our while to see how closely he conforms to ways of accessing texts that were standard in Late Antiquity.

His period was one during which people became more concerned with the systematic study of important texts. The tendency may have begun around the 1st century BC, when the oral teaching of philosophy was replaced by the reading and exegesis of texts, a teacher's function coming to be seen as expounding a text that formed part of a canon.[52] But it spread far beyond such circles, and the 4th and 5th centuries, in particular, were awash with people commenting on texts. Jerome's teacher Donatus wrote on Virgil and Terence, Tiberius Claudius Donatus wrote twelve books interpreting Virgil, Servius produced a commentary on Virgil that has come down in two quite different versions, while Macrobius wrote a commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis* that occurs in the last book of Cicero's *De republica* and, in his *Saturnalia*, what are purported to have been a series of discussions on Virgil in which Servius participated. An obscure African author, Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, who has sometimes been unpersuasively identified with bishop Fulgentius of Ruspe, produced

[52] Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge MA, 2002), pp. 150–52.

an exposition of Virgil, while a number of *Lives* of Virgil produced in Late Antiquity constitute a by-product of the interest displayed in him during the period.[53] One sees here an adumbration of the canon of authors who stand at the centre of the modern teaching of Latin; I forebear discussion as to just why this should be so. But it was not a great jump from a scholar seated in a *cathedra* expounding a text to a bishop, similarly seated, expounding the Bible. Of course, Gregory could not make the activity of such scholars his own; Macrobius, for example, was interested in what the correct reading of the text might be,[54] and dealt with a text in a thematic rather than sequential manner. But he and Gregory were engaged in the same activity.

Hence, while the status Scripture enjoyed among its Christian exegetes far transcended that accorded any text among non-Christian commentators, it could be approached in similar ways. Indeed, in many respects Gregory's approach to the Book of Job was that of a teacher of grammar: in establishing the text, offering a résumé of the general sense of the book, then a word-for-word explanation in which difficult words and points of natural science were clarified and an explanation of the text provided according to historical sense and moral teaching; Gregory was operating according to a standard pedagogical format.[55] In Gregory's repeated statement, "You need to know", we hear the voice of a patient teacher who reproduces what is effectively a verbal tic of Servius in, for example, his commentary on Virgil's *Georgics*.[56] But it was not merely a commentarial approach to his text that Gregory shared with the expositors of classical texts, for he also interpreted his text in a way similar to the manner in which they did theirs. While Servius's commentary on the *Bucolics*, for example, is more concerned than Gregory's exposition to explain how

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[53] Fabio Stok, "Virgil between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 1/2 (1994), 15–22 at 15–16.

[54] Hence, at *Aen.* 5.238 he accepts *porriciam* instead of *proiciam*; Virgil's editor for the Oxford Classical Texts disagrees with him. Gregory, on the other hand, was prepared to move from one translation of the Bible to another as served his purpose (*causa probationis*, *Ep.* 5.53a (CCSL 143:7, l. 226), in some ways a problematic principle!

[55] P. Cazier, "Analogies entre l'encyclopédie chrétienne des *Moralia* et l'enseignement du *grammaticus*: l'exemple de l'angélologie," in *Grégoire le grand* (Paris, 1986), pp. 419–28. Needless to say, Gregory's interest in allegory forms an additional element.

[56] The word *sciendum* is frequent in the opening portions of Servius' commentary on Virgil's *Georgics*, as in the discussions of ll. 1, 33, 43, 52 (ed. Georg Thilo, *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Georgica Liber 1.1–100 Commentarius* [Leipzig, 1887], pp. 129, 140, 143, 146). Gregory uses it often, as in *Mor. praef.* 3.8 (CCSL 143A:14 l. 55), 1.36.51 (52 l. 8), 2.7.8 (64 l. 25), but its greatest frequency seems to be in the heavily didactic material towards the end of the fourth book of the *Dialogues*: 41.6, 50.2, 59.6; 62.1.

his text functions grammatically, allegory raises its head as early as the first line.[57] Moreover, the approach that led to his greatest work being called the *Moralia* reflected the ethical emphasis of the Stoicism that was popular in Late Antiquity, and he has been shown to have made use of a "thoroughly Christianized Stoicism," although one has the sense that his access to this tradition was by way of Christian sources rather than an independent reading of classical texts.[58] In particular, the process of self-examination at the end of the *Moralia* and that recommended in the fourth book of the *Regula Pastoralis* stand in the tradition of self-examination that was a feature of ancient philosophy.[59]

A scholar has recently observed that Gregory marks a definite break with a long tradition,[60] but the statement may be qualified. Elements of that tradition were known to him, with which he was able to assert a relationship in a playful style and which he could appropriate with elegance. While he stood within an established tradition of Christian denial of secular literary concerns, and the position of bishop he held was one in which interest in such concerns was discouraged, in practice he went some way towards subverting this convention. Moreover, Gregory's text-based form of writing and his way of approaching his text, which we may be tempted to regard as purely Christian, reflect the concerns and techniques that had developed within the ancient world. What set him apart from the pre-Christian past was a feeling that it had nothing to teach him, but, rather than seeing him as having wilfully turned his back on this past we may interpret him, a man who lived after the caesura that the mid-6th century had marked in Italian life, as not knowing enough about it to make it seem interesting. The interaction with antiquity in which Boethius had engaged was no longer possible, the ancient world having become too

[57] *Servii Grammatici Commmentarius* (ed. Thilo, p. 5).

[58] Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages 2 Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought through the Sixth Century* (Leiden, 1990), pp. 257–58; Colish is not an entirely sound guide to Gregory. The indebtedness to Seneca of Gregory's near contemporary Martin of Braga, on the other hand, is all too clear: *Martini episcopi Bracarensis opera omnia*, ed. Claude W. Barlow (New Haven, CO, 1959), pp. 53 with n. 8 (pp. 61–62), 206–7, while his is a strong presence in Boethius. Similarly, Gregory has been seen as drawing on and appealing to traditions, without it being clear how they came to him: Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 150–51, 161, 173.

[59] Gregory can be set within the tradition described by Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. I. Arnold Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford, 1995).

[60] Ubaldo Pizzani, "Autori Pagani (conoscenza di Gregorio Magno degli)," in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, eds. Giuseppe Cremascoli and Antonella Degl'Innocenti (Florence, 2008), pp. 23–25 at p. 24.

distant to pose a threat; "[t]here was no pagan culture now".[61] In a passage of his *Moralia*, Gregory observed that there had been many gentiles who had devoted themselves to the disciplines of the wise of this world, paying attention to the things that people regard as honourable, in the belief that they would be saved by the honour that they maintained; they did not seek the mediator between God and humans, holding as they did that the teaching of the philosophers was sufficient.[62] Ambrose and Augustine, who knew the teachings of these gentiles, had found it necessary to wrestle with them; Gregory did not. Elsewhere, however, there were other possibilities, and before long the insatiably curious Isidore of Seville would turn to them again.

[61] Robert A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 220–221. I wish to state how much I owe to this author's intellectual example and sustained friendship.

[62] *Mor.* 18.45.73.

CHAPTER TWELVE

GREGORY'S EXEGESIS: OLD AND NEW WAYS OF APPROACHING THE SCRIPTURAL TEXT

Scott DeGregorio

Gregory's enshrinement as one of the four doctors of the western Church, as well as his epithet "the Great", vividly underscore his pivotal role in the life of that institution over which he alone among the four great doctors presided as pope. This chapter will survey his exegetical writings. These were neither as prolific nor as dedicated to theology proper as those of Ambrose, Augustine or Jerome, and yet their influence on subsequent centuries was in no way less profound. For medieval commentators, Gregory was a constant source and an acknowledged inspiration.[1] In the modern consensus, he is the key intermediary biblical exegete between the earlier age of the fathers and the medieval tradition, and is indeed, as Evans has suggested, "perhaps the most significant single influence upon the detailed working out in the West of the system of interpretation adumbrated in the writings of Origen and Augustine, and involving literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses."[2] In his magisterial study of the exegetical tradition, de Lubac had already implied as much, speaking, in his treatment of allegory, of "The Gregorian Middle Ages".[3] The earlier view of von Harnack that Gregory was merely a "vulgarizer" derived in part from misconceived comparisons to Augustine.[4] By contrast, recent

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[1] See Réne Wasselynck, "L'influence de l'exégèse de S.Grégoire le grand sur les commentaires bibliques médiévaux (VIIe–XII s.)," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 32 (1965), 157–204; E. Ann Matter, "Gregory the Great in the Twelfth Century: *The Glossa Ordinaria*," in *Gregory the Great: A Symposium*, ed. John C. Cavadini (Notre Dame, IN, 1995), pp. 216–26; Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr., Kees Dekker, and David F. Johnson (eds), *Rome and the North: The Early Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe*, Mediaevalia Groningana n.s. 4 (Paris and Leuven, 2001).

[2] Gillian R. Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 147.

[3] Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Mark Sebanc and E.M. Macierowski, 3 vols (Grand Rapids, MI, 2000), 2:117–25.

[4] Adolf von Harnack, *An Outline of the History of Dogma*, trans. Edwin Knox Mitchell (London, 1893), pp. 387–91. For good rebuttals of his view, see Raoul Manselli, "Gregorio Magno e la Bibbia," in *La Bibbia nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1963), pp. 67–101, at 68–70; and de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 2:206.

scholarship has stressed the fundamental differences between Augustine and Gregory and their respective worlds, and emphasized how those differences altered Gregory's view of the Bible and its interpretation.[5] This will be our first topic, the redrawing of intellectual boundaries in the span between Augustine and Gregory that determined his approach to Scripture. Discussion will turn thereafter to his exegetical corpus and hermeneutic method, and then finally and briefly to the nature of his wide-ranging influence on the ensuing tradition.

Changed Worlds: Gregory's Biblical Horizons

Gregory was born in 540, some 200 years after Augustine. The gap in time is sizable, as are the attendant changes in culture and outlook. One might explain them as reflecting the transition from the late antique to the medieval world,[6] but Markus' distinction between secular and sacred realms of experience offers a more supple framework for what is at stake.[7] The age of Augustine was marked by the centralizing of Christianity's position in the empire. Christians were no longer an insignificant minority, but neither did they inhabit a world purged of secular Roman customs. Instead, secular and sacred overlapped. Augustine knew the realities of Roman secular power, its cultural and political traditions, the flourishing municipal life of the great cities, and their religious cults. Such matters formed the primary contexts for his thought and promoted his attempt to distinguish the *ciuitas Dei* from the *ciuitas terrena*. The cultural influence and theological structures of Christianity had yet to become a unified and totalizing discourse, the only conceivable horizon.[8]

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[5] In addition to the work of Robert Markus cited below in note 7, see Carole Straw, *Authors of the Middle Ages, vol. 12: Gregory the Great*, Historical and Religious Writers of the Latin West, ed. Patrick Geary (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 41–46, and her more extensive earlier treatment in *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, 1988), esp. pp. 9–20.

[6] Jeffrey Richards, *Consul of God: The Life and Times of Gregory the Great* (London, 1980), 1, 4–24.

[7] Robert A. Markus, "The Sacred and the Secular: From Augustine to Gregory the Great," *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1985), 84–96, reprinted in *Sacred and Secular. Studies on Augustine and Latin Christianity* (London, 1994). See also his further development of the argument in *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 213–28, and *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 34–41; also Peter R.L. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity, AD 150–750* (London, 1971). I draw freely from these in what follows.

[8] See Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, CA, 1991).

In Gregory's time, two centuries later, the cultural and intellectual landscape had been fundamentally altered, in two ways. First, by the end of the 6th century the status of the secular order which had engulfed Augustine was no longer ultimate. Rome's greatness had reached its nadir. Peace and stability had given way to invasion, plague and decay. Hence, Gregory took a pervasively eschatological view of the world in its extreme old age, indeed on the brink of its dissolution.[9] Interpreting the boiling pot in Ezekiel 24, he would write:[10]

> Rome herself once appeared to be the mistress of the world, yet you see what now remains of her... For where is the senate? Where now are the people? Her bones have wasted away, her flesh has been consumed, every order of earthly dignity in her is extinct. The whole of it has been boiled dry. As for those of us who have remained, not few in number, each day we are still even now oppressed by swords and countless tribulations. Therefore it can be said: "Then set it empty upon burning coals." For because there is no longer any senate, the people have perished and yet, among the few who survive, grief and lamentation are daily multiplied. Rome is now empty and burning.

As if such an apocalyptic scenario proved insufficient, Gregory hurried to offer another image, that of an aged eagle balding from head to toe, "because a city which has lost its people has shed its feathers. The pinions of its wings, with which it was wont to fly to its prey, have fallen because all its powerful men by whom it used to snatch others' goods are extinct."[11]

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[9] See Raoul Manselli, "L'escatologismo di Gregorio Magno," in *Atti del I° congresso di Studi Longobardi* (Spoleto, 1952), pp. 72–83; and Claude Dagens, "La fin des temps et l'Église selon S. Grégoire le grand," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 58 (1970), 273–88.

[10] *HEz.* 2.6.22 (CCSL 142:311–12, ll. 534–6, 560–9): "Ipsa autem quae aliquando mundi domina esse uidebatur qualis remanserit Roma conspicitis... Vbi enim senatus? Vbi iam populus? Contabuerunt ossa, consumptae sunt carnes, omnis in ea saecularium dignitatum ordo exstinctus est. Excocta est uniuersa compositio eius. Et tamen ipsos non paucos qui remansimus adhuc cotidie gladii, adhuc cotidie innumerae tribulationes premunt. Dicatur ergo: Pone quoque eam super prunas uacuam. Quia enim senatus deest, populus interiit, et tamen in paucis qui sunt dolores et gemitus cotidie multiplicantur, iam uacua ardet Roma." Translations throughout are my own unless otherwise noted. Richards, *Consul of God*, p. 54, sees the Ezekiel homilies as "an extended lamentation over the destruction of Rome... It is clear that for him Rome equaled civilization, and its decline was a paradigm of the approaching end of civilization."

[11] *HEz.* 2.6.23 (CCSL 142:312–13, ll. 593–7): "Caluitium ergo suum sicut aquila dilatat, quia plumas perdidit, quae populum amisit. Alarum quoque pennae ceciderunt, cum quibus uolare ad praedam consueuerat, quia omnes eius potentes exstincti sunt, per quos aliena rapiebat." Trans. Theodosia Gray, p. 229.

Such catastrophic upheaval led inexorably to a second alteration. As Roman *imperium*, the senate and other traditions withered away, a fundamentally Christian orientation came to replace them. No longer was the Church eclipsed by the power of the old secular order. Rather, the demise of secular Rome meant the full ascendency of the ecclesiastical establishment and its community of Christian adherents, the only true haven in a time fraught with apocalyptic expectation. Ascetic values surged and fostered a bourgeoning monastic movement. A thoroughly biblical culture now trumped the secular disciplines of earlier tradition. Gregory's reminder to Desiderius, bishop of Gaul, that "in one mouth praises of Christ do not harmonize with praise of Jupiter"[12] and his brusque dismissal of "the rules of Donatus"[13] in his prefatory letter to the *Moralia*, show how the tide had turned.

The implications of these changes for Gregory's exegesis were profound. As the frameworks of his world-view changed, so too did his horizons for interpreting Scripture. Addressing audiences that were already Christian, and moreover often marked by an ascetic-monastic inclination, Gregory developed an exegetical program whose major theological thrust was pastoral, moral, and spiritual, oriented towards illuminating experience, reforming behaviour and enflaming desire for God.[14] In this Gregory eschewed the speculative or purely theological interests of Origen or Ambrose; his focus was practical, befitting the needs of the professional monastic audience for whom he wrote, with its intense desire for a practi-

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[12] *Ep.* 11.34 (CCSL 140A:922, ll. 6–8): "Quam rem ita moleste suscepimus ac sumus uehementius aspernati, ut ea quae prius dicta fuerant in gemitu et tristitia uerteremus, quia in uno se ore cum iouis laudibus Christi laudes non capiunt."

[13] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 5 (CCSL 143:7, ll. 220–2): "quia indignum uehementer existimo, ut uerba caelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati." On the superiority of Scripture, cf. *Mor.* 20, (CCSL 143A:1003, ll. 12–15): "ut ergo de rerum pondere taceam, scientias tamen omnes atque doctrinas ipso etiam locutionis suae more transcendit, quia uno eodemque sermone dum narrat textum, prodit mysterium..." However, the view of F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great, His Place in History and Thought*, 2 vols (London, 1905), 1:74, that Gregory's writings show little trace of classical training is surely wrong. The opinion of Straw is preferable: "Gregory's education was probably the best available in sixth-century Rome..." (Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great. Perfection in Imperfection* [Berkeley, 1988], p. 5). On Gregory's careful self-positioning *vis-à-vis* secular literature, see Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World*, pp. 34–40, and John Moorhead, "Gregory's Literary Inheritance," *infra*.

[14] On this key Gregorian trait, see Bernard de Vregille, "Écriture saint et vie spirituelle dans la tradition; B. Du 6e au 12e siècle," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 4/1 (Paris, 1960), cols 169–87; Claude Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le grand. Culture et expérience chrétiennes* (Paris, 1977), pp. 55–81; and Patrick Catry, "Lire l'écriture selon saint Grégoire le grand," *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 34 (1972), 177–201, at 191–3, 201.

cal guide to the serious task of progress in the spiritual life. Kessler puts it well: "Gregory was not a systematic theologian. His aim was the interpretation of the Bible in the sight of a committed Christian life. Conversion, culminating in the ascetic life of contemplation, is his perspective of understanding the Scriptures."[15]

The Gregorian Exegetical Corpus

The Bible formed the natural context for everything that Gregory wrote. His writings show how indelibly monastic formation had saturated his mind with Scripture.[16] "No reader of Gregory's works," so Petersen observes, "can fail to be struck by his immense and detailed knowledge of the subject matter of the Bible and by the way it permeates his thought and writing."[17] Hence even his works that are themselves not expressly exegetical are suffused with exegetical aims and methods, in their use of biblical quotation, for instance, or in their application of scriptural teaching to the practicalities of life. Petersen's own analysis of typology in the *Dialogi* suggests the methods used in Gregory's genuine exegetical works were here recast in story-form for wider audiences.[18] In the *Regula Pastoralis* the ideal *rector* is himself an astute exegete who "meditates diligently and every day on the precepts of the sacred Word".[19] To endorse the point, Gregory offers a spiritual interpretation of Exodus 25:12–15:[20]

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[15] Stephan Kessler, "Gregory the Great (*c.*540–604)," in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser, 2 vols (Leiden, 2004), 2:1336. Cf. Giorgio Zeveni, "La Metodologia dell' intelligenze spirituale della sacra scrittura come esegesi biblica secondo Gregorio Magno," in *Parole e Spirito. Studi in onore de Settimio Cipriani* (Brescia, 1982), pp. 867–915, at 888–89, who describes Gregory's contemplative-pastoral approach as "esegesi totale".

[16] Benedetto Calati, "San Gregorio Magno e la Bibbia. La vita spirituale come riposta e compinmento della parola ispirata," in *Bibbia e spiritualità*, ed. Cipriano Vagaggini (Rome, 1967), pp. 121–78, at 124–5, and Manselli, "Gregorio Magno e la Bibbia," p. 69, who speaks of Gregory's "passionate and relentless study of the Bible" (*suo studio appassionato ed incessante della Bibbia*).

[17] Joan M. Petersen, *The* Dialogues *of Gregory the Great in their Late Antique Cultural Background* (Toronto, 1984), p. 25. See also Dagens, *Saint Grégoire*, pp. 55–81, for the view that Scripture for Gregory presented an entire "culture biblique", as the ultimate source of knowledge and spiritual authority for Christian behaviour.

[18] See Petersen, *Dialogues*, pp. 25–55.

[19] *RP* 2.11 (SC 381:252, ll. 3–5): "Sed omne hoc rite a rectore agitur, si supernae formidinis et dilectionis spiritu afflatus, studiose cotidie sacri eloquii praecepta meditetur."

[20] *RP* 2.11 (SC 381:254, ll. 24–34): "Quid per arcam nisi sancta Ecclesia figuratur? Cui quattuor circuli aurei per quattuor angulos iubentur adiungi, quia in eo quod per quattuor mundi patres dilatata tenditur, procul dubio quattuor sancti Euangelii libris accincta praedicatur. Vectesque de lignis sethim fiunt, qui isdem ad portandum circulis insertuntur;

> What is symbolized by the ark but the Holy Church? It is commanded that it is to be provided with four rings of gold in the four corners, which, insofar as it extends to the four parts of the world, doubtless is declared to be equipped with the four books of the Holy Gospels. And staves of wood are made and inserted into these rings for carrying it, because courageous and persevering teachers, like incorruptible timbers, are to be sought out, who by always adhering to the teaching of the sacred books can proclaim the unity of Holy Church, and who by being inserted as it were into the rings, carry the ark.

The same exegetical strain marks even many of Gregory's letters. Martyn's recent English translation counts over 500 biblical quotations in the pope's voluminous correspondence, probably instances of quotation from memory. Throughout his letters, it is a constant concern for Gregory to speak through Scripture and to encourage his addressees to take its teaching to heart. In one memorable passage, he urges the physician Theodore to embrace the study of Scripture with special eagerness, since Scripture is, he explains, nothing less than God's "own letters" to humanity.[21]

In the strict sense, Gregory's exegetical works are represented by his preaching on the Old and New Testaments. To the former category belong his treatment of Job, Ezekiel and the Song of Songs. A letter of 602 informs us that, in addition, he gave homiletic discourses on the Heptateuch, the Prophets, Proverbs, and the Book of Kings.[22] But the commentary on the latter surviving under Gregory's name, *In I Librum Regum*, is now known

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quia fortes perseuerantesque doctores uelut imputribilia linga quaerendi sunt, qui instructioni sacrorum uoluminum semper inhaerentes, sanctae Ecclesiae unitatem denuntient, et quasi intromissi circulis arcam portent."

[21] *Ep.* 5.46 (CCSL 140:339–40, ll. 37–38, 42–47): "Quid autem est scriptura sacra nisi quaedam epistula omnipotentis Dei ad creaturam suam?... Imperator caeli, dominus hominum et angelorum pro uita tua tibi suas epistulas transmisit, et tamen, gloriose fili, easdem epistulas ardenter legere neglegis. Stude, quaeso, et cotidie creatoris tui uerba meditare; disce cor Dei in uerbis Dei, ut ardentius ad aeterna suspires, ut mens uestra ad caelestia gaudia maioribus desideriis accendatur." Trans. John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great* (Toronto, 2004), 2:373. On the view of Scripture as a letter inspired by God, see Catry, "Lire l'écriture," 179–81; and Dagens, *Saint Grégoire*, p. 59.

[22] *Reg.* 12.6 (CCSL 140A:975, ll. 31–36): "Praeterea quia isdem carissimus quondam filius meus Claudius aliqua me loquente de prouerbiis, de canticis canticorum, de prophetis, de libris quoque regum et de eptatico audierat, quae ego scripto tradere prae infirmitate non potui, ipse ea suo sensu dictauit, ne obliuione deperirent, ut apto tempore haec eadem mihi inferret et emendatius dictarentur." Cf. *Reg.* 9.13 (CCSL 140A:575, ll. 4–7). Where Gregory, writing to the Sicilian patrician Venatius regarding his request for "an allegorical interpretation of the deeds of Sampson" (*quaedam... vobis de Sampsoni factis allegorice*) explains that he has been too ill to fulfill that request. Trans. Martyn, *Letters*, 2:554.

to be the work of a 12th-century monk of Cava,[23] while work on the other books no longer survives.[24] Meanwhile, Gregory's New Testament exegesis is represented principally by a series of forty gospel homilies he preached during the liturgy. Hence just four works, *Moralia in Iob, In Canticum Canticorum, Homiliae in Hiezechielem,* and *Homiliae in Evangelia,* are what remain of his exegesis. They will be the focus of the rest of this chapter.

Gregory's first exegetical enterprise belongs to the late 570s when his position of *apocrisiarius* or papal legate brought him to Constantinople. He was accompanied there by a group of monks from Rome. The *Moralia in Iob,* Gregory's first, greatest and most influential work began as discourses for this close circle of initiates.[25] The dedicatory letter to Leander of Seville explains the seminal role these monks played not only in the conception but also the very design of the commentary:[26]

> To the burden of their petition they added as well the stipulation that I should not only discuss the words of the story through their allegorical meanings, but should also direct the allegorical meanings towards moral edification; and that I should also—a still heavier burden—support my interpretations with other scriptural texts and should even add explanations of those passages if they seemed difficult enough to require untangling.

One wonders whether these *fratres* could have anticipated that their pleas would lead to a massive work of thirty-five books in six volumes, surely one of the longest in the patristic tradition. The introductory letter also illuminates the method of composition. Gregory delivered the first part of the book as oral recitations recorded in short-hand form by notaries,

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[23] Adalbert de Vogüé, "L'auteur du Commentaire des Rois attribué à saint Grégoire: un moine de Cava?" *Revue bénédictine* 106 (1996), 319–31, and his edition of the text, *Commentaire sur le Premier Livre des Rois* (SC 432 [Paris, 1998], pp. 9–28). On the possibility of this work nevertheless containing authentic Gregorian material, see Francis Clark, "Authorship of the Commentary 'In I Regum': Implications of A. de Vogüé's Discovery," *Revue bénédictine* 108 (1998), 61–79.

[24] Judith McClure, "Gregory the Great: Exegesis and Audience," (Oxford Univ., D. Phil. thesis, 1979), pp. 52–103. I return to *Reg.* 12.6 below.

[25] *Moralia in Iob* (ed. Marc Adriaen, CCSL 143, 143A, 143B [Turnhout, 1979–85]); *Grégoire le grand: Morales sur Job* (eds and trans Robert Gillet et al., SC 32, 212, 221, 476, 525, 538 [Paris, 1975–2010]). These volumes cover Books 1–2, 11–16 and 28–35; the other books remain to be done. On the enormity of the work's influence, see de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis,* 2:121–2.

[26] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 1 (CCSL 143:2, ll. 46–53: "Qui hoc quoque mihi in onere suae petitionis addiderunt, ut non solum uerba historiae per allegoriarum sensus excuterem, sed allegoriarum sensus protinus in exercitium moralitatis inclinarem, adhuc aliquid grauius adiungentes, ut intellecta quaeque testimoniis cingerem et prolata testimonia, si implicita fortasse uiderentur interpositione superadditae expositionis enodarem."

while the rest of his exposition he dictated to a scribe. When he returned to Rome and had leisure to work, he revised much of his text[27] and turned it into book form.[28] It is this revised text that has come down to us,[29] and it appears those revisions occupied Gregory well into the 590s.[30] It was work that was clearly dear to him. He identified with the suffering Job, as he would with the visionary Ezekiel,[31] and tapped the mainline of the biblical text by developing its overriding themes of righteous suffering with regard to the individual Christian on the one hand and Christ and the Church on the other.[32] The original audience was close to his heart too, as the initial setting of the monastic *collatio* makes clear: Gregory was speaking intimately to a select group of like-minded ascetic companions, who, like him, had devoted themselves to a life of contemplation and were eager to hear him expound the Book of Job with a view to their

[27] The third part of *Moralia*, Books 11–22, remains unrevised. See *Mor. ad. Leandrum* 2 (CCSL 143:3, ll. 83–86): "... quamuis tertiam huius operis partem, ut colloquendo protuli, paene ita dereliqui, quia, cum me fratres ad alia pertahant, hanc suptilius emendari noluerunt."

[28] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 2 (CCSL 143:3, ll. 72–79): "Vnde mox eisdem coram positis fratribus priora libri sub oculis dixi et, quia tempus paulo uacantius repperi, posteriora tractando dictaui, cum que mihi spatia largiora suppeterent, multa augens pauca subtrahens atque ita, ut inuenta sunt, nonnulla derelinquens ea, quae me loquente excepta sub oculis fuerant, per libros emendando composui, quia et cum postrema dictarem, quo stilo prima dixeram, sollicite attendi." For Gregory, the terms *loqui* and *dictare* represent two distinct methods of composition: *loqui* signaling *ex tempore* oral delivery recorded by notaries, *dictare* indicating spoken exposition addressed to a scribe explicitly to create a written text. For discussion of these terms, see Paul Meyvaert, "The Date of Gregory the Great's Commentaries on the Canticle of Canticles and on I Kings," *Sacris erudiri* 23 (1978), 191–216, at 207.

[29] On the possibility of an early form of the work having existed, see Paul Meyvaert, "Uncovering a Lost Work of Gregory the Great: Fragments of the Early Commentary on Job," *Traditio* 50 (1995), 55–74.

[30] This is the implication from Gregory's letters to Leander, bishop of Seville: see *Reg.* 1.41, written in April of 591, and *Reg.* 5.53, written in 595 and eventually affixed to the *Moralia* as a preface. Gregory first promised to send him a copy as early as 591, but could not fulfill that promise until 595. Meanwhile, the reference in *Mor.* 27.12.21 (CCSL 143B:1346, ll. 66–80) to the conversion of the English may suggest that Gregory's revisions continued even into the late 590s. But see McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," pp. 3–6, for an argument that he had completed the *Moralia* before April 591.

[31] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 5 (CCSL 143:3, ll. 195–7): "Et fortasse hoc diuinae prouidentiae consilium fuit, ut percussum Iob percussus exponerem, et flagellati mentem melius per flagella sentirem." See also *Mor.* 35.20.49 (CCSL 143B:1810–11, ll. 78–127) for Gregory's deeply personal conclusion to the work. On Ezekiel, see below.

[32] The three subjects of Job (the individual Christian, the Church, and Christ) obviously relate to the three interpretative levels that Gregory distinguishes—historical, allegorical, and tropological. For more on this, see McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," pp. 20–23, 31–36.

specialized calling.[33] Indeed, he was not pleased to learn that a bishop in Ravenna had read out parts of the *Moralia* to the public during vigils: "For it is not a work for the general public, and it produces an obstacle rather than assistance for ill-educated readers."[34]

It used to be thought Gregory's treatment of the Song of Songs, *In Canticum Canticorum*,[35] also belonged to an early period in his career, when he was still a monk at St. Andrew's. But the consensus now puts it within the period of his pontificate, specifically the years 594 to 598.[36] The evidence for such precise dating relates to the role played by Claudius of Ravenna in redacting the text. It is necessary to return here to Gregory's letter of 602, which includes the Song of Songs among the list of Old Testament books on which Gregory, then ill, had given homilies. Claudius took notes and later revised the material into book form, but Gregory, the letter reveals, was not pleased with the results.[37] While Claudius was never a monk at Saint Andrew's, he did stay with Gregory in Rome between 594 and 598, making this the more likely period for the work. Debate exists over how much of the surviving text reflects Claudius' editorial work and how much Gregory's original unrevised oral discourse.[38] Debate also surrounds the state of the text itself, for the oldest manuscripts preserve a

[33] McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," p. 3, pictures them, I think rightly, as including ascetics "of some calibre and intellectual attainment". See her further remarks, pp. 4–6, 20–23, 46–47.

[34] *Ep.* 12.6 (CCSL 140A:975, ll. 45–49): "Illud autem quod ad me quorundam relatione perlatum est, quia reuerentissimus frater et coepiscopus meus Marinianus legi commenta beati Iob publice ad uigilias faciat, non grate suscepi, quia non est illud opus populare et rudibus auditoribus impedimentum magis quam prouectum generat." Trans. Martyn, *Letters*, 3:811.

[35] *Cant.* (ed. Patrick Verbraken, CCSL 144 [Turnhout, 1963]); and *Grégoire le grand: Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques* (ed. Rodrigue Bélanger, SC 314 [Paris, 1984]). An English translation of the work has just been published: *Gregory the Great: On the Song of Songs*, trans. Mark DelCogliano, Cistercian Studies Series 244 (Collegeville, MN, 2012). On the work's authenticity, see Bernard Capelle, "Les homelies de saint Grégoire sur le cantique," *Revue bénédictine* 41 (1929), 204–17, and DelCogliano's introduction, pp. 29–33.

[36] Meyvaert, "The Date," 207; and Bélanger, *Commentaire*, pp. 22–28. For support for the earlier date, see Barbara Müller's article in this volume, *supra*.

[37] *Ep.* 12.6 (CCSL 140A:975 ll. 36–42): "Quae cum mihi legisset, inueni dictorum meorum sensum ualde inutilius fuisse permutatum. Vnde necesse est ut tua experientia, omni excusatione atque mora cessante, ad eius monasterium accedat, conuenire fratres faciat et sub omni ueritate, quantascumque de diuersis scripturae cartulas detulit, ad medium deducant, quas tu suscipe et mihi celerrime transmitte." For the first half of this passage, see note 22 above. On these so-called "Claudian recensions", see McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," pp. 52–103.

[38] For the view that our text reflects Claudius' revisions, see Capelle, "Les homelies," 215, and Bélanger, *Commentaire*, pp. 15–28. For a dissenting view, see Meyvaert, "The Date," 213–16, who claims the text better corresponds to a notary's unrevised transcription.

seemingly fragmentary work, containing an exposition of the Song's first eight verses only.[39] The Irish missionary Columbanus appears to have known a longer text,[40] and indeed Verbraken and Bélanger, the work's two modern editors, surmise a continuous commentary existed but was truncated through the vicissitudes of transmission.[41] Nevertheless, its importance within Gregory's *oeuvre* is not diminished thereby. Its long prologue is of the utmost importance for its theoretical discussion of allegory (see below); the exegesis itself has proved fruitful for the mining of sources—a lamentably impoverished area in Gregorian studies—showing reliance on Origen in particular; and its reception demonstrates that it was widely studied and acclaimed.[42] Overall, Gregory follows the main lines established by tradition.[43] The love for the Bride stands sometimes for the corporate love of Christ for his Church, at others for a burning desire for God experienced by the individual soul. Yet a distinctive Gregorian stamp may be discerned in the varying of historical, allegorical and tropological modes of interpretation, and even more in the overall mystic-monastic cast that covers the whole. Like Origen, Gregory understands the Song to teach about mystical union with God, and yet he endeavours, through a variety of exegetical strategies, to wrest from this elusive and most profound text, meanings that can apply to the whole Church in its varied make-up of different interpretive capacities. Thus he makes a point of indicating, right at the start of this commentary, that whereas the companions of the Bridegroom stand for either angels or those who have reached perfection, the young girls who attend the Bride may be taken to represent spiritual novices, that is mere beginners in the faith. "Therefore," he continues, "since we have said that the Bridegroom is the Lord

DelCogliano's new translation provides a good summary of the issue: see introduction, pp. 33–43.

[39] Patrick Verbraken, "La tradition manuscrite du commentaire de Saint Grégoire sur le Cantique des Cantiques," *Revue bénédictine* 73 (1963), 277–88, and "Un nouveau manuscrit du Commentaire de S. Grégoire sur le Cantique des Cantiques," *Revue bénédictine* 75 (1965), 143–5.

[40] Columbanus, *Ep.* 1 (ed. G.S.M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, vol. 2 [Dublin, 1957], pp. 2–12).

[41] Verbraken, "La tradition manuscrite," 280; Bélanger, *Commentaire*, p. 22.

[42] On sources, see Paul Meyvaert, "A New Edition of Gregory the Great's Commentaries on the Canticle and on I Kings," *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 215–25; Joan M. Petersen, "The Influence of Origen upon Gregory the Great's Exegesis of the Song of Songs," *Studia Patristica* 18:1 (1985), 343–47; and Domingo Ramos-Lissón, "En torno a la exégesis de San Gregorio Magno sobre el 'Cantar de los Cantares'," *Teología y vida* 42 (2001), 241–65.

[43] See the comprehensive study by Vincenzo Recchia, *L'esegesi di Gregorio Magno al cantico dei cantici* (Turin, 1967).

and the Bride is the Church, let us as though we were young girls or companions listen to the words of the Bridegroom, let us listen to the words of the Bride, and from their speech let us learn the fervour of love."[44] Distinctively, Gregory's handling of the Song thus fuses the pastoral impulse with mystical yearning. Matter's conclusion is apt: "The desire for God that echoes through this commentary is unmistakably monastic; it shows the perfectionism of the monastic ideal extended out into the Church and every human soul."[45]

The *Homiliae in Hiezechielem*,[46] containing Gregory's preaching on Ezekiel, may be dated to 593, though it seems likely that his engagements with this difficult prophetic book were not restricted to a single year but involved long gestation.[47] Nevertheless, the preface to Book 2 mentions the Lombard Agilulf's invasion of Rome, usually dated to 593.[48] Moreover, the preface to the first book explains that Gregory published the work eight years later; it also reveals that he preached these homilies "before the people" (*coram populo*), the setting being non-liturgical and the audience mixed though very likely predominantly monastic.[49] The work does not provide a *lectio continua* of Ezekiel. Book 1, containing twelve

[44] *Cant.* 3 (CCSL 144:14, ll. 239–42): "Quia igitur sponsum et sponsam dominum et ecclesiam diximus, uelut adulescentulae uel ut sodales audiamus uerba sponsi, audiamus uerba sponsae, et in eorum sermonibus feruerem discamus amoris."

[45] E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 96.

[46] *Homiliae in Hiezechielem* (ed. Marc Adriaen, CCSL 142 [Turnhout, 1971]; *Grégoire le grand: Homélies sur Ezéchiel*, ed. Charles Morel, 2 vols, SC 327 and 360 [Paris, 1986, 1990]).

[47] Meyvaert, "The Date," 202, n. 25, suggests the homilies could have been delivered over a more extended period than the single year of 593.

[48] *HEz.* 2, *praef.* (CCSL 142:205, ll. 10–12): "Aliud, quod iam Agilulphum Langobardorum regem ad obsidionem nostram summopere festinantem Padum transisse cognouimus." On the date of the work, see Meyvaert, "The Date," 202, n. 25; Morel, SC 327:10–11; and Stephan Kessler, *Gregor der Grosse als Exeget: Eine theologische Interpretation der Ezechielhomilien* (Innsbruck, 1995), pp. 64–72.

[49] *HEz.* 1, *praef.* (CCSL 142:3, ll. 1–8): "Homilias, quae in beatum Hiezechihelem prophetam, ita ut coram populo loquebar, exceptae sunt, multis curis irruentibus in abolitione reliqueram. Sed post annos octo, petentibus fratribus, notariorum schedas requirere studui, easque fauente Domino transcurrens, in quantum ab angustiis tribulationum licuit, emendaui." McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," p. 218, characterizes the audience as "composed mainly of the monks of St. Andrew's but open to others of his disciples," while Meyvaert, "The Date," 202, n. 25, posits a more diverse group of listeners: "Perhaps they were given in an open church to a predominantly monastic audience—outside of any liturgical celebration—and with the understanding that any pious lay people, zealous about the word of God, could attend." For a similar view, see Vincenzo Recchia, *Le Omelie di Gregorio Magno su Ezechiele (1–5)*. Quaderni di Vetera Christianorum 8 (Bari, 1974), pp. 32–35.

homilies, treats only Ezekiel's opening vision and prophetic call, and so stops near Ezekiel chapter 4. The ten homilies of Book 2 then deal exclusively with Ezekiel chapter 40, the prophet's vision of the new temple. As the preface to Book 2 explains, the Lombard threat had greatly curtailed Gregory's time, forcing him to move directly to the temple vision which his audience implored him to elucidate.[50] Possibly, then, Gregory would have explicated all of Ezekiel had the current political circumstances not thwarted him.

These twenty-two homilies contain some of his most profound exegesis. After a first homily on the nature of prophecy, the exegesis ranges over a number of typically Gregorian themes—the practice of the virtues, compunction, the life of prayer, scriptural understanding, the reciprocity of action and contemplation, the Church, and the office of preaching. Yet it is the detailed and spiritually sensitive nature of the analyses of these themes that make Gregory's work so profound. Especially significant here is his interweaving of the active and contemplative lives, and beyond that of the two lives with the study, reading, and teaching of Scripture. Thus in Homily 1.5 Gregory probes the interface between the two lives, the soul's attempt to rise from one to the other, and its falling back (*reuerberatio*) upon itself and return to the practice of good works.[51] Gregory is aware, in other words, that setbacks, even failure, naturally accompany progress in the spiritual life and that spiritual overreach is a constant temptation for the disciple of contemplation, one which only a return to practical concerns can remedy.

At the same time, however, Gregory teaches that exegesis, through the hard work involved in the reading and interpretation of the Bible, can itself serve as a practical good work, able to put the exhausted or confused soul back on the path of spiritual growth. In fact, Gregory links the stages of spiritual advancement to varying levels of scriptural understanding:[52]

> For the reader, if he seeks something moral or historical in them [sc. divine words], a sense of moral history follows; if he seeks something allegorical, before long it will recognize an allegory; if he seeks something contemplative,

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[50] *HEz.* 2, *praef.*: cf. n. 48 above.

[51] *HEz.* 1.5.12 (CCSL 142:88–89, ll. 195–244).

[52] *HEz.* 1.7.9 (CCSL 142:88, ll. 172–77): "Legentis enim spiritus, si quid in eis scire morale aut historicum quaerit, sensus hunc moralis historiae sequitur. Si quid typicum, mox figurata locutio agnoscitur. Si quid contemplatiuum, statim rotae quasi pennas accipiunt et in aere suspenduntur, quia in uerbis sacri eloquii intellegentia caelestis aperitur."

> immediately the wheels as it were take wing and hang in the air, because in the words of the sacred message a divine intelligence is revealed.

For Gregory, in a word, Scripture reading should lead to contemplation, action, and further contemplation in a process where these two exist as a constant, necessary dialectic. There is much greater systemization here than in Origen, reflecting Gregory's sense that he was writing for spiritual professionals with the structures already (above all, the monastery) in place to adopt and enact a practical, life-long programme of spiritual growth.

As in his work on Job, Gregory here again displays a strong sense of fascination and personal involvement with the head character, this time Ezekiel, the *speculator* or "watchman" of the House of Israel (see Ezk. 3:17). In one long and remarkable passage, Gregory, sensing the affinity between Ezekiel's besieged Jerusalem and his own imperiled Rome, laments his own short-coming as the *speculator* of Rome and its Church:[53]

> O how hard these things that I am saying are for me, because when I speak I hurt myself. My tongue does not contain the preaching that it should, nor, in so far as my tongue does contain it, does my life follow my tongue. I am often entangled in idle words and, lazy and negligent as I am, I cease from the exhortation and edification of my neighbours.

The personal dimension that Gregory finds resonating with him throughout the text, along with the high level of obscurity and bizarre imagery at the literal level which also captivated him, demanding as it did highly spiritualized allegorical modes of reading, would make this one of his most sophisticated and impressive pieces of exegetical analysis. Indeed, although Gregory speaks in this work as a preacher, "he attends to every detail of the text, moving through it verse by verse, as if he were writing a commentary".[54]

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[53] *HEz.* 1.11.5 (CCSL 142:171, ll. 82–87): "O quam dura mihi sunt ista quae loquor, quia memetipsum loquendo ferio, cuius neque lingua, ut dignum est, praedicationem tenet, neque inquantum tenere sufficit uita sequitur linguam. Qui otiosis uerbis saepe implicor et ab exhortatione atque aedificatione proximorum torpens et negligens cesso." For insightful commentary on this passage, see Conrad Leyser, "'Let Me Speak, Let Me Speak': Vulnerability and Authority in Gregory the Great's Homilies on Ezekiel," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 33–34, 2 vols (Rome, 1991), 2:169–82, and his further remarks in *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 160–87.

[54] Angela Russell Christman, *What Did Ezekiel See?: Christian Exegesis of Ezekiel's Vision of the Chariot from Irenaeus to Gregory the Great* (Leiden, 2005), p. 18, n. 15.

In contrast to the aforementioned exegetical works, the *Homiliae in Evangelia*[55] are popular liturgical homilies, forty in all, which were preached within the liturgical context of the mass and addressed to the laity, hence to a broad audience, not a select cadre of monks.[56] Gregory delivered them over a two-year period, between 590–92, during the first two years of his pontificate,[57] when suddenly his role as a mediator of scriptural text had been decisively altered, pushed beyond elite religious circles to encompass the people at large.[58] These homilies were connected to specific liturgical occasions and delivered mainly on Sundays, major feasts, and saints' days in the designated stational churches in or around Rome.[59] The prefatory letter to the collection addressed to the Sicilian bishop Secundinus explains that, because of poor health, Gregory had dictated the first twenty homilies to a notary who read them to the people, but preached twenty more *coram populo* because the people wished to hear him *uiua uoce*, which was clearly not an easy business for Gregory.[60] He then had the two groups of homilies placed in two separate codices, in the order of their presentation.[61] Although varying in length, these homilies are uniform in their methods and objectives. Their main task is to explain the gospel reading; this takes the form of straightforward verse-by-verse discussion of the text, first in its literal dimensions and then its higher spiritual senses, though with far less emphasis on *arcana* than the Old Testament pieces. Indeed, Gregory's care to lead his audience gently along is everywhere present: "In the words of

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[55] *Homiliae in Evangelia* (ed. Raymond Étaix, CCSL 141 [Turnhout, 1999]; *Grégoire le grand: Homélies dur l'Évangile, livre I (1–20), livre II (21–40)*, eds Raymond Étaix, Charles Morel, and M. Bruno Judic, 2 vols, SC 485 and 522 [Paris, 2005, 2008]). On the transmission of the work, see, in addition to the relevant sections in these critical editions, Raymond Étaix, "Répertoire des manuscrits des homélies sur l'Evangile de saint Grégoire le grand," *Sacris erudiri* 36 (1996), 107–45.

[56] All but one are addressed to the laity: *HEv.* 17 addresses a group of bishops.

[57] Jeremiah P. Coffey, *Gregory the Great "Ad populum": A Reading of* XL Homiliarum in Evangelia libri duo (New York, 1988), pp. 14–15.

[58] McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," p. 149.

[59] Coffey, *Gregory "Ad populum"*, pp. 11–12.

[60] *HEv., Ep. ad Secundinum* (CCSL 141:1, ll. 5–9): "Inter sacra missarum sollemnia, ex his quae diebus certis in hac ecclesia legi ex more solent, sancti euangelii quadraginta lectiones exposui. Et quarumdam quidem dictata expositio assistenti plebi est per notarium recitata, quarumdam uero explanationem coram populo ipse locutus sum atque ita ut loquebar excepta est." At the beginning of one homily, Gregory alludes to the people's disinterest in dictated material: see *HEv.* 21.1 (CCSL 141:173, ll. 15–17). On the difficulties Gregory's health posed for his preaching, see further *HEv.* 22.1 (CCSL 141:181, ll. 1–4); and 34.1 (CCSL 141:300, ll. 1–3).

[61] *HEv., Ep. ad Secundinum* (CCSL 141:1, ll. 18–21): "Easdem quoque homilias eo quo dictae sunt ordine in duobus codicibus ponere curaui, ut et priores uiginti quae dictatae sunt, et posteriores totidem quae sub oculis dictae, in singulis essent distinctae corporibus."

holy Scripture, dearly beloved, we must first attend to the literal truth, and then seek to understand the spiritual allegory";[62] "I have completed my literal explanation of this story. Now let me give a mystical interpretation of what has been said, if that seems good";[63] "I have determined to examine the meaning of the Gospel reading summarily and not word by word, lest an overlong explanation be a burden upon your kindness."[64] Such chariness, wholly absent from Gregory's Old Testament exegesis, points up his desire to provide simple and clear teaching that would offer effective moral guidance to his audience. For this reason he also incorporates a number of *exempla* or extended narratives into his preaching: many of these are reused to great effect in the *Dialogi*.[65] Such variations in method show that Gregory was willing to adapt his methods to the needs of his audience, combining and even simplifying the interpretive modes used in his monastic discourses with rhetorical strategies crafted to suit liturgical popular homiletics. For this, among other reasons, the *Homiliae in Evangelia* were enormously useful to preachers long after Gregory's time.[66] Still, some have questioned how much this kind of popular preaching really suited Gregory.[67] He seems to have been done with it after 593, when he gladly turned back to the Old Testament and preached on Ezekiel as his monks had requested, and surely that work and his other Old Testament pieces do reveal the special knack Gregory had for more monasticized modes of preaching. Yet the *Homiliae in Evangelia* are important precisely because they are not addressed to a spiritual elite. If they display an exegesis that is less allegorical and more direct than the Old Testament commentaries,

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[62] *HEv.* 40.1 (CCSL 141:394, ll. 1–3): "In uerbis sacri eloquii, fratres carissimi, prius seruanda est ueritas historiae, et postmodum requirenda spiritalis intelligentia allegoriae."

[63] *HEv.* 33.5 (CCSL 141:292, ll. 102–3): "Haec, fratres carissimi, historica expositione transcurrimus, nunc si placet, ea quae dicta sunt mystico intellectu disseramus."

[64] *HEv.* 23.1 (CCSL 141:193, ll. 3–6): "Lectionis ergo euangelicae summatim sensum statui non per singula uerba discutere, ne dilectionem uestram ualeat sermo prolixior expositionis onerare."

[65] There are eleven *exempla* in all. For discussion, see McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," p. 149; and Coffey, *Gregory "Ad populum"*, pp. 11–12. On the overlap between the *Homiliae in Evangelia* and *Dialogi*, see Conrad Leyser, "The Temptations of Cult: Roman Martyr Piety in the Age of Gregory the Great," *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000), 289–307.

[66] See Patrica Allwin Deleeuw, "Gregory the Great's 'Homilies on the Gospels' in the Early Middle Ages," *Studi Medievali* 26 (1985), 855–69; and de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:176.

[67] Both McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," pp. 171–4 and Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 139 emphasize Gregory's disenchantment with popular preaching; but Coffey, *Gregory "Ad populum"*, pp. 21–22, disagrees: "Gregory is most at home in the sphere of practical guidance of the faithful."

they are still wholly Gregorian in their development of such characteristic themes as the need for penitence and compunction, the centrality of good works and proper morals, and the impending doom of Judgment Day.

Gregory's Method

What hermeneutic principles inform Gregory's exegetical writings? The question requires turning to the works themselves for, unlike Augustine in the *De doctrina christiana*, Gregory wrote no separate tract on hermeneutics. This is not surprising, as Markus has observed: "Being a man much less inclined than was Augustine to analyze troubling intellectual problems, Gregory took no interest in the theoretical discussion of signification and meaning."[68] In two places, however, Gregory did pause to reflect on some key aspects of his exegetical method: in the dedicatory letter to the *Moralia* addressed to his friend Leander, and in the preface to *In Canticum Canticorum*. Let us look first at what he says in the *Moralia*.[69]

The letter to Leander, we have seen, divulges that it was while Gregory was in Constantinople that he assented to the wishes of his close companions, Leander chief among them, to expound the Book of Job with specific attention to relating its allegorical meanings to moral edification.[70] The agenda set for him by his friends required, says Gregory, that he "speak now as a simple expositor of the text, now as a guide on the ascent of contemplation, and now as a moral preceptor".[71] But he adds that he had to deviate from this three-fold task, specifically by curtailing "simple"

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[68] Robert A. Markus, *Signs and Meanings: World and Text in Ancient Christianity* (Liverpool, 1996), p. 48.

[69] For a detailed study of the Leander letter, see Stephan Kessler, "Gregor der Grosse und seine Theorie der Exegese: Die 'Epistula ad Leandrum'," in *L'esegesi dei Padri Latini dalle origini a Gregorio Magno. XXVIII Incontro di studiosi dell' antichità cristiana*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 68 (Rome, 2000), pp. 690–700; cf. Manselli, "Gregorio Magno e la Bibbia," pp. 74–75.

[70] See note 26 above for the full passage. In addition to these two key passages, there are numerous *obiter dicta* on exegetical method throughout the Gregorian corpus that constraints of space prevent me from treating here. Some notable instances include *HEz.* 1.6.10–12; *HEz.* 1.9.29–33; *HEz.* 2.3.16–18; *HEz.* 2.10.1–3; *Mor.* 4, *praef.*; *Mor.* 18.3.7, *Mor.* 21.1.1–3; and *HEv.* 22.

[71] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 2 (CCSL 143:3, ll. 90–92): "Vnde et in eo saepe quasi postponere ordinem expositionis inuenior et paulo diutius contemplationis latitudini ac moralitatis insudo."

(i.e. literal) exposition so that he might fruitfully pursue whatever opportunities arose for amplifying his two higher aims:[72]

> The commentator on divine eloquence should model his behaviour on that of a river: a river that runs along its bed if it encounters open valleys to one side immediately diverts the course of its current into them, then—when it has flooded the channels—immediately flows back again into its bed. Thus indeed should the commentator on God's Word act should he find an occasion for proper edification. He should turn the stream of his words out into the nearby valley and then return to the bed of his discourse when he sees the fields of related instruction sufficiently watered.

Gregory's insistence that the exegete must be allowed to prioritize *ad hoc* the order of the exposition then leads to another triadic scheme, namely, the classic division of senses into historical, allegorical and moral levels of meaning. Again Gregory makes the point through metaphor: "First, we lay the foundations of historical fact; next, through allegory we erect a fabric of the mind to be a citadel of faith; finally, through the exposition of the moral sense we clothe the edifice with a coloured garment."[73] This trichotomy of history, allegory, and moral interpretation or tropology places Gregory in the tradition of Origen and Jerome, who also enumerated three senses, rather than Augustine and Cassian, who made the quadruple distinction into history, allegory, tropology, and anagogy.[74] In Gregory's view, these three senses can be seen to inform any and every passage of Scripture; the exegete's role is to discern and explain them, and especially to proceed by utilizing history and allegory for moral

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[72] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 2 (CCSL 143:4, ll. 96–105): "Sacri enim tractator eloquii morem fluminis debet imitari. Fluuius quippe dum per alueum defluit, si ualles ex latere concauas contingit, in eas protinus sui impetus cursum diuertit, cumque illas sufficienter impleuerit, repente sese in alueum refundit. Sic nimirum, sic diuini uerbi esse tractator debet, ut, cum de qualibet re disserit, si fortasse iuxta positam occasionem congruae aedificationis inuenerit, quasi ad uicinam uallem linguae undas intorqueat et, cum subiunctae instructionis campum sufficienter infuderit, ad sermonis propositi alueum recurrat."

[73] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 2 (CCSL 143:4, ll. 110–14): "Nam primum quidem fundamenta historiae ponimus; deinde per significationem typicam in arcem fidei fabricam mentis erigimus; ad extremum quoque per moralitatis gratiam, quasi superducto aedificium colore uestimus."

[74] On Gregory's inheritance and use of this triad, see de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:132–59; Manselli, "Gregorio Magno e la Bibbia," pp. 75–76; McClure, "Exegesis and Audience," pp. 20–23; and Zeveni, "La Metodologia," pp. 871–83. Occasionally Gregory hints at a fourfold model: e.g. *HEz.* 2.9.8 (CCSL 142:362–3, ll. 255–64); and *Mor.* 16.19.24 (CCSL 143A:812–13, ll. 1–9), which distinguishes a separate contemplative sense which, like anagogy, lifts the soul to higher things ("... ut modo nuda nos pascat historia, modo sub textu litterae uelata medullitus nos reficiat moralis allegoria, modo ad altiora suspendat contemplatio ...").

edification (*primum... deinde... ad extremum*).[75] In the actual space of the *Moralia*, however, this scheme does not hold sway for long: mostly Gregory distinguishes just two senses, one literal, the other some form of spiritual meaning; moreover, literal-historical explanations virtually cease after Book 4, as Gregory's attention turns exclusively to allegorical and moral matters. To be sure, in his letter he prioritizes the literal-historical level as the foundation of the other senses; we even find him worrying about the exegete who neglects meanings given plainly in the letter or who twists words violently in pursuit of allegorical significations.[76] Yet he maintains that some passages cannot be treated literally "because when they are understood superficially they offer no instruction to the reader but only generate error".[77] The overall impression, no doubt, is that Gregory appears "to be in a bit of a hurry to skip over the step of history so as to explain allegory at his leisure".[78] But in the "theory" of the letter at any rate, ideally the exegete must know how to strike a balance between literal and spiritual modes of analysis, varying the difficulty of his teaching so that lambs can wade while elephants swim.[79]

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[75] On the literal and allegorical as routes to tropology, see Bertrand De Margerie, "Grégoire le grand: Intériorise la lecture de l'Écriture," in *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse: IV. L'Occident latin de Léon le grand à Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris, 1990), pp. 141–85, at 144–7.

[76] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 4 (CCSL 143:5–6, ll. 163–7, 172–3): "Aliquando autem qui uerba accipere historiae iuxta litteram neglegit, oblatum sibi ueritatis lumen abscondit, cum que laboriose inuenire in eis aliquid intrinsecus appetit, hoc, quod foris sine difficultate assequi poterat, amittit.... Quae uidelicet si ad allegoriae sensum uiolenter inflectimus, cuncta eius misericordiae facta uacuamus." On the dangers of excessive allegorizing, see further *HEz.* 1.3.4 (CCSL 142:35, ll. 64–75); and *HEv.* 40.1 (CCSL 141:394, ll. 1–12); on the priority of the literal sense, see *HEz.* 1.6.7 (CCSL 142:70, ll. 106–15), along with the remarks of de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 2:45–48; de Vregille, "Écriture saint," col. 170; and Zeveni, "La Metodologia," pp. 874–5.

[77] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 3 (CCSL 143:4, ll. 120–2): "... aliquando autem intellegi iuxta litteram nequeunt, quia superficie tenus accepta nequaquam instructionem legentibus, sed errorem gignunt." Cf. *Mor.* 4, *praef.* (CCSL 143:158, ll. 1–28).

[78] de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 2:128. See also Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 32–35.

[79] *Mor. ad Leandrum* 4 (CCSL 143:6, ll. 177–8): "Quasi quidam quippe est fluuius, ut ita dixerim, planus et altus, in quo et agnus ambulet et elephas natet." Cf. *HEz.* 1.6.2 (CCSL 142:67, ll. 17–25), where Gregory deploys an equally memorable image, that of a wheel, similarly to underline Scripture's appeal to different capacities among the faithful: "Quid autem rota, nisi sacram Scripturam signat, quae ex omni parte ad auditorum mentes uoluitur et nullo erroris angulo a praedicationis suae uia retinetur? Ex omni autem parte uoluitur, quia inter aduersa et prospera et recte et humiliter incedit. Circulus quippe praeceptorum illius modo sursum, modo deorsum est, quae perfectioribus spiritaliter dicuntur, infirmis iuxta litteram congruunt, et ipsa quae paruuli iuxta litteram intellegunt, docti uiri per spiritalem intelligentiam in altum ducunt." On this theme, see Catry, "Lire l'écriture," 187–88; Dagens, *Saint Grégoire*, pp. 234–35.

In the prologue to *In Canticum Canticorum*, the allegorical sense is treated in greater detail, hardly surprising given the content of this biblical text. As in the letter to Leander, here too Gregory's discussion is laden with provocative imagery. He opens with the present condition of fallen humanity: banished from the joys of paradise, its cold and unbelieving heart is consequently blind to spiritual understanding. To reach it in so listless a state, the divine speech addresses it "in figurative language, and by way of things with which it is acquainted introduces it to a love with which it is not acquainted".[80] In this connection, allegory functions like a crane (*quasi quandam machinam*) that can hoist the soul from earthly intelligible words up to God:[81]

> We must notice how marvelously and mercifully he works with us; for in order to set our hearts on fire and instigate us to sacred love he reaches down even to the vocabulary of our own sensual love. But just as he humbles himself in speaking, so he elevates us in understanding; for we learn from the words of this love by what virtue we burn in love of the divine.

There is a danger in this, Gregory observes: instead of elevating the soul up to God, this sensual language of love, if literalized, could cement attachment to exterior things even more. The words of sacred Scripture equate to the colours of a painting: fixating on external words is like clinging to mere colours.[82] The cloak of the letter must therefore be penetrated to reach the deeper mysteries of the spirit concealed within. In a final related image, Gregory likens Scripture to a mountain from which God descends into our hearts; at first, the mist of allegory overclouds the mountain, but the flames of love with which Scripture ignites the soul make its ascent possible, raising it up "as a burnt offering for the contemplation of God".[83]

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[80] *Cant.* 1 (CCSL 144:3, ll. 11–13): "Idcirco per quaedam enigmata sermo diuinus animae torpenti et frigidae loquitur et de rebus, quas nouit, latenter insinuat ei amorem, quem non nouit."

[81] *Cant.* 3 (CCSL 144:4, ll. 31–37): "... notandum est quam mirabiliter nobis cum et misericorditer operatur, qui, ut cor nostrum ad instigationem sacri amoris accenderet, usque ad turpis amoris nostri uerba distendit. Sed, unde se loquendo humiliat, inde nos intellectu exaltat: quia ex sermonibus huius amoris discimus, qua uirtute in diuinitatis amore ferueamus."

[82] *Cant.* 4 (CCSL 144:5, ll. 49–54): "Sic est enim scriptura sacra in uerbis et sensibus, sicut pictura in coloribus et rebus: et nimis stultus est, qui sic picturae coloribus inheret, ut res, quae pictae sunt, ignoret. Nos enim, si uerba, quae exterius dicuntur, amplectimur et sensus ignoramus, quasi ignorantes res, quae depictae sunt, solos colores tenemus."

[83] *Cant.* 5 (CCSL 144:8, ll. 116–19): "Iste ergo ignis, quidquid in nobis est exterius rubiginis et uetustatis, exurat: ut mentem nostram uelut holocaustum in dei contemplatione offerat."

Of course, neither of these highly poeticized passages intends anything like a prescriptive, systematic exegetical theory.[84] Still, there is much in them that is illustrative of how Gregory works his way through scriptural texts: the polarity of letter and spirit; the existence of multiple levels of meaning; the tension between outer and inner, open and hidden; the providential nature of *obscuritas*; the firm insistence on inspiration, that God's voice speaks through and is incarnated in the written word; and the profoundly mystical streak, Scripture and its exegesis as paths to contemplation. In this as in much else, Gregory was merely traditional. For him the Bible as a book written *intus et foris*, "within and without",[85] and its multilayered message taught something about Christ and the Church, either through figure and prophecy as in the Old Testament, or through open proclamation as in the New: like a stone in which fire lies hidden, the literal words had to be struck with interpretation so that the flame of spiritual meaning could fly forth and ignite real inner understanding concerning the mystery of Christ.[86] This general Christocentric view of Scripture and its interpretation, based on the fundamental unity between the two Testaments, was the legacy Gregory had inherited from Paul and the early fathers, and so much in his exegesis moves in perfect step with that tradition, indeed forms the key channel through which patristic doctrine reached the Middle Ages.

The Gregorian Legacy

As for Gregory's own original contribution, at least two areas stand out. These are perhaps still best understood as instances of degree rather than kind, but his imprints remain visible here all the same. There is broad

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[84] Gregory frequently talked of Scripture in metaphorical terms, comparing it to a gate (*HEz.* 2.3.2, CCSL 142:238, ll. 43–47), a forest (*HEz.* 1.5.1, CCSL 142:57, ll. 1–5) a wheel (*HEz.* 1.6.2, CCSL 142:67–68, ll. 16–32), food (*HEz.* 1.10.3, CCSL 142:145, ll. 17–35), and a mirror (*Mor.* 2.1.1, CCSL 143:59, ll. 1–3), to name just a few of his more memorable comparisons.

[85] *HEz.* 1.9.30 (CCSL 142:139, ll. 590–1): "Liber enim sacri eloquii intus scriptus est per allegoriam, foris per historiam."

[86] *HEz.* 2.10.1 (CCSL 142: 379, ll. 14–18): "Sic etenim, sic uerba sunt sacri eloquii, quae quidem per narrationem litterae frigida tenentur, sed si quis haec, aspirante Domino, intento intellectu pulsauerit, de mysticis eius sensibus ignem producit, ut in eis uerbis post animus spiritaliter ardeat, quae prius per litteram ipse quoque frigidus audiebat." On the centrality of Christology to Gregory's exegetical thought, see Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, "A Confluence of Imagery: Exegesis and Christology According to Gregory the Great," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine, Robert Gillet, and Stan Pellistrandi (Paris, 1986), pp. 327–35; and Dagens, *Saint Grégoire*, pp. 59–62.

consensus that his wide reading in western patristic sources,[87] and the fusion of that heritage with his own monastic background and contemplative bent, catered to the emergence in his exegesis of something distinctive, even new.[88] The overriding focus on *conuersio morum*, filtered through a distinctively monastic spirituality and articulated in vividly experiential terms, found original and influential expression in Gregory, the first monastic pope to establish a literary identity as an exegete and to develop a brand of spiritual exegesis that could bridge the gap between an earlier patristic age and the bourgeoning monastic culture of the Middle Ages. The prolific exegetical career of someone like Bede, who looked so intently to Gregory as a major inspiration, or the many other writers in the Carolingian age and beyond who came under Gregory's spell, attests very well to just how catalyzing was his impact in this regard.[89]

Secondly, and relatedly, there is the matter of Gregory's marked preference for allegorical exposition. An earlier age of modern scholarship, perhaps understandably, cast this as his greatest fault. But a proper understanding of it has since been resuscitated, recognizing it as integral to the radically monastic and deeply contemplative way that Gregory approached the reading of Scripture.[90] His tendency to play down the literal sense, and to open up a free-play of signification at the allegorical level *en route* to tropology and, rising beyond that to contemplation,

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[87] Gregory's unfamiliarity with Greek sources (save those available through Latin intermediaries) has been much discussed; for a range of opinion, see Joan M. Petersen, "Did Gregory the Greek Know Greek?" in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, Studies in Church History 13, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1976), pp. 121–34; eadem, "'Homo omnino latinus?' The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great," *Speculum* 62 (1987), 529–51; and Gerard J.M. Bartelink, "Pope Gregory the Great's Knowledge of Greek," trans. Paul Meyvaert, in *Gregory the Great: A Symposium*, ed. John C. Cavadini, pp. 117–36. See also the Editors' Preface to this volume.

[88] Cf. De Margerie, "Grégoire le grand," p. 150: "Grégoire reprend et développe les données qu'il a reçues de la Tradition antérieure, de manière originale, sans la contredire."

[89] On Gregory and Bede, see Scott DeGregorio, "The Venerable Bede and Gregory the Great: Exegetical Connections, Spiritual Departures," *Early Medieval Europe* 18 (2010), 43–60, and Paul Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory the Great*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1964).

[90] On exegesis and contemplation, see chapter 2 of Bernard McGinn's *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century* (New York, 1994), and his further study, "Contemplation in Gregory the Great," in *Gregory the Great: A Symposium*, ed. John C. Cavadini, pp. 146–67; and in the same volume, Grover Zinn, "Exegesis and Spirituality in the Writings of Gregory the Great," pp. 168–80. Also Stephan Kessler, "Monastische Mystik auf biblischer Grundlage: Theorie und Praxis der Kontemplation bei Gregor dem Grossen," *Erbe und Auftrag* 79 (2003), 17–26. The monastic element in Gregory's exegesis has been well brought out via comparison to *lectio divina*: see Benedetto Calati, "La lectio divina nel pensiero di Gregorio Magno," in *Ascolto della Parola e preghiera. La lectio divina*, ed. Salvatore Panimolle (Vatican City, 1987), pp. 159–67.

marked a departure from the trepidation that Augustine, at least later in life, felt about the potential perils of allegorical interpretation and textual obscurity, and put Gregory closer to the hermeneutical stance of Origen or perhaps Ambrose.[91] At the same time, Gregory was a more systematic and practical exegete than either of these two writers, viewing the interpretation of Scripture from the point of view of the professional ascetic or monk that wanted from the Bible not so much theological speculation or contemplation for contemplation's sake but a practical path to "real" spiritual growth. As such, the careful interpretation of Scripture was always for Gregory not only a route to contemplation but a practical training in proper moral behaviour, indispensable to those who would guide others in the spiritual life. Through this synthesis of the patristic tradition, Gregory's hermeneutic constituted a powerful legacy to medieval commentators and preachers, who would turn again and again to the *Moralia* and his other writings as the consummate works of the premier master of the allegorical sense and the doctor of contemplation. Indeed, it is this long influence as exegete and spiritual guide combined that would become utterly central to Gregory's reputation in the centuries to come (as further chapters will show), and that helps to explain why he would be so readily accorded a place among the greatest fathers of the western Church.

[91] See Markus, *Signs and Meanings*, pp. 45–70.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A COOPERATIVE CORRESPONDENCE: THE LETTERS OF GREGORY THE GREAT*

Richard Matthew Pollard

Of all of Gregory's writings, there is perhaps no passage more striking than in the prologue to his *Dialogues*, where he paints a vivid, wistful picture of his present life as pope in a near poetic nautical metaphor:[1]

> Indeed my troubled mind recalls how once it was in the monastery... but now, in pastoral duties, endures the agitations of worldly men.... And so I weigh what I now bear, I weigh what I have lost; and when I look upon what I have surrendered, what I bear is made heavier. For look: now I am struck by the waves of a great sea, and in the ship of my mind I am hammered by the winds of a fierce storm, and when I recall my previous life, as if I have sighted the shore with a backward glance, I sigh. And what is still harder to bear, as I am savaged and roiled by immense waves: I now can scarcely see the harbour I left behind.

This passage underlines Gregory's fond memories for his time spent at his monastery on the Caelian hill, "the happiest time of his life",[2] contrasted with the weight of papal duties, which Gregory feels he bears alone. Yet Gregory did not pilot the little boat of the papacy all by himself. Like the popes that preceded him, and those that followed, the success of Gregory's "voyage" was dependent, far more than usually realized, on the abilities

* This essay had a long and sometimes painful genesis. I would like to thank Matthew Dal Santo and Bronwen Neil for their help and patience in the reshaping process. Further gratitude goes to Julian Hendrix for his comments on a much earlier version. Finally, this essay would have taken a very different direction were it not for the anonymous readers.

[1] Gregory, *Dial.*, 1, *Prol.* 3–5 (SC 260:12): "Infelix quippe animus meus ... meminit qualis aliquando in monasterio fuit ... At nunc ex occasione curae pastoralis saecularium hominum negotia patitur ... Perpendo itaque quid tolero, perpendo quid amisi, dumque intueor illud quod perdidi, fit hoc grauius quod porto. Ecce etenim nunc magni maris fluctibus quatior atque in naui mentis tempestatis ualidae procellis inlidor, et cum prioris uitae recolo, quasi post tergum ductis oculis uiso litore suspiro. Quodque adhuc est grauius, dum inmensis fluctibus turbatus feror, uix iam portum ualeo uidere quem reliqui." Cf. *Ep.* 5.53a (eds Paul Ewald and Ludwig Hartmann, MGH Epp. 1 [Berlin, 1891], pp. 353–58, at 354, ll.5–13). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

[2] Robert Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 12.

of numerous colleagues. Their legacy is hidden, but a careful study of the letters produced by the papacy offers a glimpse of where they worked, who they were, and what abilities they possessed. Such an investigation also allows us to make a broader assessment of education, and the functioning of the papacy, in Rome *c.*600 than would be possible looking at Gregory alone.

Latin Prose-Rhythm

It is a seemingly arcane feature of Latin prose style that will offer the most help in identifying the men behind Gregory, namely Latin prose-rhythm.[3] Prose rhythm was a rhetorical embellishment that involved arranging words at the end of sentences into particular rhythmical patterns. By Gregory's day, it had a very long history in Latin literature: prose-rhythm had been used by Latin writers since before Cicero, who himself used rhythm extensively while also describing its practice in detail in his *De oratore*.[4] In antiquity, the rhythm was based on syllable quantities ("longs" and "shorts", represented here as – and ⏑), much like classical Latin poetry. A favoured cadence might be *nōstră dīrēxĭmūs*, a double cretic (– ⏑ – repeated). In Late Antiquity, cadences came more and more to be based on word accent, in conjunction with, or instead of syllable length: hence *nóstra diréximus* above came to be understood as an accentual pattern of two word accents, each followed by two unaccented syllables (óooóoo).[5] This accentual system of rhythm is now known as *cursus*, and a few patterns of word-accent came to dominate: these are known as *velox* (óoooóo, e.g. *ultima pervenisse*), *planus* (óooóo, e.g. *causa nascatur*), *tardus* (óooóoo, e.g. *nostra direximus*), with some authors also using *trispondaicus* (óoooóo, e.g. *corda vagarentur*). Despite these changes, prose-

[3] On Latin prose-rhythm and its history in antiquity, see now Steven Oberhelman, *Prose Rhythm in Latin Literature of the Roman Empire: First Century B.C. to Fourth Century A.D.* (Lewiston, 2003).

[4] Cicero, *De oratore* 3.44–51 (ed. Augustus Samuel Wilkins [Oxford, 1902], pp. 228–37); Cicero, *Orator* 50–71 (ed. Augustus Samuel Wilkins [Oxford, 1903], pp. 164–188). On Cicero's use of prose-rhythm, see Thaddäus Zielinski, *Das Clauselgesetz in Ciceros Reden. Grundzüge einer oratorischen Rhythmik* (Leipzig, 1904). For briefer summaries see Oberhelman, *Prose Rhythm*, pp. 79–184; Albert Willem de Groot, *La Prose métrique des anciens* (Paris, 1926), pp. 9–10; Lancelot P. Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 135–62.

[5] On this transformation, see Harald Hagendahl, *La prose metrique d'Arnobe* (Göteborg, 1937), esp. pp. 9–90; Steven Oberhelman, "The History and Development of *Cursus Mixtus* in Latin Literature," *Classical Quarterly* 38 (1988), 228–42.

rhythm continued to be taught as part of the traditional Roman education in rhetoric, and was known to Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose, who used it extensively in their compositions.[6] Amongst 6th-century authors like Ruricius, Cassiodorus, Caesarius of Arles, and Ennodius, the three main cadences (*velox, planus* and *tardus*) typically make up 80–90% (or more) of all sentence-ends.[7] Notably, Cassiodorus uses prose-rhythm even in the *Institutiones*, written after his retreat from secular life to his monastary of Vivarium. The use of prose-rhythm in a text, therefore, was an enduring sign that the author had enjoyed special training in Latin style and rhetoric, and was not something lightly abandoned.

As such, it is very interesting to note that none of Gregory's personal compositions shows an intentional use of prose-rhythm.[8] Specifically, in his *Moralia, Regula Pastoralis, Dialogi, Homiliae in Evangelia* and *in Ezechielem*, the main three cadences sought by users of prose-rhythm make up only 52% of the sentence-ends.[9] This figure is, first of all, the number of rhythmical cadences we would expect to be produced accidentally by an author who had not been trained to use *cursus*. Steven Oberhelman, for instance, surveyed a number of Latin authors from the early modern period (long after the practice of *cursus* was abandoned) and found that the three main cadences (*velox, planus, tardus*) were found in only about 55% of sentence-ends, as a result of unintentional, accidental use.[10]

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[6] Steven Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics in Fourth-century Christian Literature* (Atlanta, 1991).

[7] For Caesarius, see Giovanni Orlandi, "*Clausulae* in Gildas's *De Excidio Britanniae*," in *Gildas: New Approaches*, eds Michael Lapidge and David Dumville (Woodbridge, 1984), p. 147; for Ennodius, see Steven Oberhelman and Ralph Hall, "A New Statistical Analysis of Accentual Prose Rhythms in Imperial Latin Authors," *Classical Philology* 79.2 (1984), 126; for Cassiodorus, see Mary J. Suelzer, *The Clausulae in Cassiodorus* (Washington, 1944), p. 10; for Ruricius, Harald Hagendahl, *La correspondance de Ruricius* (Göteborg, 1952), pp. 32–50.

[8] Kathleen Brazzel, *The Clausulae in the Works of St. Gregory the Great* (Washington, 1939), p. 65. Cf. also Rosanna Bottoni, *Il ritmo della prosa latina in età carolingia* (unpubl. diss., Milan, 1993), App. 1, tav. 36–37. Marco Pellegrini, "La prosa ritmica nelle opere di Gregorio Magno," *Filologia Mediolatina* 15 (2008), 217–48, detects *very slight* rhythmical preferences in Gregory's prose (though still completely at odds with earlier writers like Cassiodorus); I remain in doubt about this conclusion, as it depends on use of enormous samples for which Tore Janson's methodology (Tore Janson, *Prose rhythm in medieval Latin from the 9th to the 13th century* [Stockholm, 1975]) was not designed. I also reject the conclusions of John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great* (Toronto, 2004), 1:110–11, whose analysis offers no statistics and is based on metrical *clausulae*, ignoring the accentual cadences popular in Gregory's day.

[9] Brazzel, *Clausulae*, p. 63.

[10] Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, pp. 8–9, 14. For the abandonment of *cursus* in the early modern period, see Gudrun Lindholm, *Studien zum mittellateinischen Prosarythmus* (Stockholm, 1963).

Second, Gregory's figure of 52% is also manifestly at odds with earlier writers like Ennodius (83.8%) and Cassiodorus (84.2%). One of the fundamental features of Late Antique rhetorical training, seen in the language of Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Ennodius, Ruricius, Caesarius, Cassiodorus, and others is, therefore, missing (or hidden) in Gregory's Latin.

If we look at prose-rhythm in Gregory's *letters*, on the other hand, we can begin to see the important role subordinates played in his papacy. When one examines the letters issued in Gregory's name, we find that some follow the rules of accentual rhythm beloved by Caesarius and Cassiodorus, while others do not.[11] Dag Norberg noted that those letters that were almost certainly composed by the pope directly, given their very personal touches (e.g. *Reg.* 1.41, where Gregory complains of his heavy responsibilities as pope and discusses his composition of the *Moralia*), have very few accentual cadences. Many letters without these personal touches, however, unfailingly follow the rules for prose rhythm, just like letters from the papacies preceding and following Gregory.[12] This rhythmical difference between Gregory's personal letters and the others is striking: for the former, Norberg found that only about 49% of sentence-ends conform to one of the three main rhythmical typologies (very similar to the figure of 52% in Gregory's *Moralia* and Oberhelman's non-rhythmical figure just noted) whereas in the latter we find upwards of 94% sentence-ends contain these forms.[13] In a further statistical analysis of the prose-rhythm in the *Registrum*, using the more advanced statistical methodology of Tore Janson, Norberg found a similar division: those letters with clear signs of personal composition by the pope do not seem to employ prose-rhythm in any systematic way, while routine administrative letters (and many other letters) show a strong statistical preference for rhythmical sentence-ends.[14]

It beggars belief that Gregory would only use prose-rhythm in some of his letters, and not in his most important, personal letters, nor, for that matter, in any of his other works. Writers in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages tended to be reasonably consistent about using prose-rhythm,

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[11] *Registrum epistularum*, ed. Dag Norberg, CCSL 140–140a (Turnhout, 1982); trans. John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, 3 vols (Toronto, 2004).

[12] For *cursus* in the papal letters of the late 6th and 7th centuries, see my "The Decline of the Cursus in the Papal Chancery," *Studi Medievali* 50 (2009), 1–40.

[13] Dag Norberg, "Qui a composé les lettres de saint Grégoire le Grand?", *Studi Medievali* 21 (1980), 1–17.

[14] Dag Norberg, "Style personnel et style administratif dans le *Registrum Epistularum* de saint Grégoire," in *Grégoire le Grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 489–97, based on the method devised by Janson, *Prose rhythm*.

whatever the genre in which they were writing: Cassiodorus uses prose-rhythm in nearly all his major compositions, including exegetical works; the only exception is the late grammatical compilation *De orthographia.* If we look later, Paul the Deacon is similarly consistent.[15] It seems almost certain therefore that the differences in prose-rhythm reflect the distinct styles of different authors, Gregory and his subordinates. Norberg's conclusions (since upheld by Pellegrini's study of the rhythm in Gregory's letters) therefore offer very convincing evidence to distinguish letters the pope dictated himself from those letters written by others in Gregory's name.[16] Gregory's major works, the *Moralia,* the *Homiliae,* even his *Dialogi* may have been written (or at least completed) while he was pope, and were informed by his experience in that office, but they were—so far as we can tell—personal works by a man who happened to be pope. His letters, on the other hand, are not solely the products of Gregory personally, but rather of his papacy, which comprised many more people than Gregory alone.

Nothing could be more obvious than that popes were dependent on subordinates to be successful: if the duties of the papacy could have been accomplished by one man, there would have been none of the papal officials listed in Bronwen Neil's chapter *infra.*[17] But it is one thing to entrust the management of a Sicilian estate to an official, quite another to allow him to craft statements and arguments that will be issued in the name of the pope himself. As such, some may not be receptive to the idea that Gregory did not compose all of his own letters; perhaps Gregory's exalted reputation both as an author and a pope makes such a suggestion unpalatable.[18] Yet no one would be surprised to hear that Roman emperors did not write (much of) the correspondence that went out in their names:

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[15] This would seem to counter the objections of Michel Banniard ("*Zelum discretione condire*: Langages et styles de Grégoire," in *Papauté, monachisme, et theories politiques,* ed. Pierre Guichard [Lyon, 1994], pp. 29–46; esp. n. 82), who would have Gregory simply varying his style in these letters that lack rhythm. For consistency of rhythm-use in Cassiodorus, see the work of Suelzer, *Clausulae;* for Paul the Deacon, see my "Paul, Paulinus and the Rhythm of Elite Latin," in *La culture du haut moyen âge, une question d'élites?,* eds François Bougard, Régine Le Jan and Rosamond McKitterick, Haut Moyen Âge 7 (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 63–99.

[16] Pellegrini, "La prosa ritmica nelle opere di Gregorio Magno," 236–41.

[17] Cf. also Pietrina Pellegrini, *Militia clericatus, monachici ordines. Istituzioni ecclesiastiche e società in Gregorio Magno* (2nd edn, Catania, 2008).

[18] My reasons for rejecting the arguments of Banniard are stated *breviter* at n. 15 (above) and n. 43 (below), and will be fully explored in future. Cf. Thomas F.X. Noble, "The Intellectual Culture of the Early Medieval Papacy," *Rome nell'alto medioevo,* Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 48 (Spoleto, 2001), pp. 179–213, at 190.

Suetonius, for example, was the official secretary for Hadrian and must have composed many letters in the emperor's name.[19] We also know that earlier bishops of Rome employed others to write correspondence in their names from a relatively early date. Jerome, for instance, wrote letters for Pope Damasus, Prosper of Aquitaine for Leo I, and the future pope Gelasius may well have written for Pope Felix III, Gregory's great-great-grandfather.[20] Even Ennodius of Pavia, mentioned several times above, seemingly wrote a few letters for Pope Symmachus.[21] Furthermore, Gregory himself suggests that when it came to worldly matters (*causae terrenae*), as opposed to salvation of souls (*de animarum salute*), he sometimes allowed a subordinate to compose letters in his name.[22] More ambiguously, a few letters mention that Gregory had dictated (*dictauimus*) the text to a subordinate, for it to be written up (*scribendam*).[23] If such figures as Leo the Great and

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[19] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius: the Scholar and his Caesars* (London, 1983), pp. 87–90. On frequent "ghost writing" of letters in antiquity, see Hermann Peter, *Der Brief in der römischen Litteratur* (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 168–77.

[20] See Nelly Ertl, "Diktatoren frühmittelalterlicher Papstbriefe," *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* 15 (1938), 56–132, at 57–61 (Leo and Prosper), 61–66 (Gelasius and Felix III), 66–67 (Ennodius and Symmachus); Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft* 2 (Tübingen, 1933), p. 283, n. 5; Hugo Koch, *Gelasius im kirchenpolitischen Dienste seiner Vorgänger, der Päpste Simplicius (468–483) und Felix III. (483–492)*, Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-Historische Abteilung 6 (Munich, 1935); Walter Ullmann, *Gelasius I. (492–496): Das papsttum an der Wende der Spätantike zum Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 135–41; Wolfgang Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 1.2 (Munich, 1971), p. 34. For Jerome: *Ep.* 123 (ed. Isidore Hilberg, CSEL 56.1 [Vienna, 1918], pp. 82.14–16): "ante annos plurimos, cum in chartis ecclesiasticis iuuarem Damasum, Romanae urbis episcopus, et orientis atque occidentis synodicis consultationibus responderem."

[21] Stefanie A.H. Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius: A Gentleman of the Church* (Ann Arbor, 2000), pp. 170 and 202–6; William Townsend and William Wyatt, "Ennodius and Pope Symmachus," in *Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Edward Kennard Rand*, ed. Leslie Webber Jones (New York, 1938), pp. 277–291.

[22] Norberg, "Style personnel," p. 489. Most revealing is *Reg.* 6.33 (CCSL 140:407.29–31): "Pro qua re iam necessarium non fuit ut eum per epistulam meam admonere aliquid debuissem, sed tantum illa scripsi quae in causis terrenis consiliarius dictare potuit" ("As such it was not necessary that I should advise him through a letter of mine, instead I only wrote those things that a *consiliarius* could dictate in worldly matters"). See also *Reg.* 6.62 (CCSL 140:436.19–23): "Quia ergo non de rebus terrenis sed de animarum salute tractatur et uestra atque illius diuersa exsistit assertio, nihil indiscussa ueritate subtiliter respondere potuimus, quia tempore quo excellentiae uestrae scripta suscepimus corporis aegritudine tenebamur" ("And so, because it was a question of the salvation of souls and not worldly matters, and your and his arguments stood apart, we were not able to make a careful response [not having pondered the truth] since we were overcome with bodily illness at the time we received what your excellence wrote").

[23] E.g. *Reg.* 5.26; 6.12; 9.98; 11.15. In the first case, the presence of regular prose-rhythm suggests that the notary Paterius or some other subordinate composed the letter.

Damasus did not write all their own letters, then, and if Gregory himself says that others could write for him, why should we doubt that some of the letters were composed by subordinates? Prose-rhythm, as noted, simply offers a suggestion as to which letters these were.

This arrangement of allowing subordinates to write *in nomine papae* would, furthermore, have been very familiar to Gregory, who seems to have been a papal "ghost writer" before he became pope. In the 580s, Pope Pelagius II was growing increasingly frustrated with the Istrian bishops, who had gone into schism with Rome over the issue of the *Three Chapters* condemned at the council of Constantinople in 553. He sent two letters to them, arguing Rome's case, but to no effect. A longer, third letter followed, filled with quotations of authorities, in the hope of winning the Istrians back to the fold.[24] This letter, although it was written under Pelagius' name, was long suspected to have been written by Gregory instead, mostly on the strength of a comment by Paul the Deacon in the *Historia Langobardorum*.[25] Paul, who was also Gregory's biographer, claims that "Pelagius sent a rather useful letter to bishop Helias of Aquileia, [who] did not want to accept the three chapters of the council of Chalcedon. Blessed Gregory, while he was still deacon, wrote this [letter]".[26] Furthermore, Paul Meyvaert recently made a detailed study of the text, and showed that it contained a surfeit of "Gregorian" traits, which are absent from the first two letters.[27] These include preferences for particular sentence-structure, verbs (e.g. *pensare*) and metaphors (e.g. the Church as a "radiant star"), and one could add to this list.[28] Meyvaert also points to the

[24] For this piece, I have used the three letters in the edition by Paul Ewald and Ludwig Hartmann, MGH Epp. 2 (Berlin, 1899), pp. 442–467. More recent edition by Eduard Schwartz, *Concilium uniuersale Constantinopolitanum sub Iustiniano habitum*, ACO 4,2 (Strasbourg, 1914), pp. 105–32.

[25] E.g. Jeffery Richards, *Consul of God* (London, 1980), pp. 39–40 (and nn. 74–76, p. 273). Paul Meyvaert, "A Letter of Pelagius II Composed by Gregory the Great," in *Gregory the Great: a Symposium*, ed. John C. Cavadini, Notre Dame Studies in Theology 2 (Notre Dame and London, 1996), pp. 94–116, notes that Eduard Schwartz, who edited the letters in ACO 4,2, remained utterly unconvinced that Gregory had written Pelagius II's letter(s): ACO 4,2, p. xxv, n. 1.

[26] Paul the Deacon, *HL*, 3.20 (eds Ludwig Bethmann and Georg Waitz, MGH SSRL [Hannover, 1878], p. 103).

[27] Meyvaert, "A Letter of Pelagius II".

[28] To Meyvaert's list I would add the following Gregorian "traits" (citations refer to page/line of the MGH edition): the collocation *laboribus insudavit* (455.36) occurs three times in Gregory's other works, but only thirteen times total in the CLCLT 'A' database of Latin texts; *verba permut** (456.7 and 13) only occurs three times in the CLCLT, once in Cicero, once in Gregory, and once in a quotation of Gregory; *immoderatius extend** (463.39) seems characteristically Gregorian, as it occurs only once in the CLCLT, in the

letter's use of Greek sources as evidence that it was (at least partially) composed while Gregory was still in Constantinople as *apocrisarius*, that is, sometime before 587.

Gregory was key to drawing up Pelagius II's third letter then, but did he work alone? Again, probably not. As Meyvaert observed, the access to (and translations of) some Greek sources suggest that Gregory had help from his bilingual friends in gathering material for the piece.[29] But there is evidence of collaboration or revision by another party in the *style* of the letter as well: in particular, the letter uses far more rhythmical forms than would be characteristic of Gregory's prose (66% vs. 49–52%, respectively), though not as many as the two other letters of Pelagius to the Istrians (nearly 100%).[30] The specific rhythmical typologies found in the letter are also somewhat out of alignment with those that we chance to find in all of Gregory's other works.[31] It therefore seems possible that Gregory's oeuvre was either prepared in collaboration with, or revised by, someone who wrote rhythmical prose, possibly the author(s) of the first two letters, which are quite rhythmical. This sort of arrangement would not have been unusual: it seems that one of Ennodius' commissions for Pope Symmachus was revised by "the work of a committee" before being officially sent as a papal letter.[32]

Moralia 26.xlvii (CCSL 143B:1330); *verba replic** (466.5) is an relatively uncommon collocation, only occurring five times in the CLCLT database, one of which is in Gregory's *Moralia* 5.xxvii (CCSL 143:251); *ratiocinando respond** (467.5) is an extremely uncommon expression, only occurring at one other place in the CLCLT database, namely in Gregory's *Moralia*, 20.xvii (CCSL 143A:1046).

[29] Meyvaert, "A Letter of Pelagius II," p. 102.

[30] The figures for the third letter are from my own analysis, which is much more detailed than that provided to Meyvaert by Norberg ("A Letter of Pelagius II," pp. 98–99 and n. 26). I take the figure for the first two letters, however, from Norberg in that note.

[31] My results for Pelagius II's third letter (MGH Epp. 2, pp. 449–467), out of a total of 160 sentence-ends, with quotations excluded: *Cursus planus*: 46 (28.8%); *cursus tardus*: 14 (8.8%); *cursus velox*: 45 (28.1%). Total of main 3 *cursus* types: 105 (65.6% of 160). *Trispondaicus*: 46 (28.8%), other: 9 (5.6%). The highest total for *velox* in any of Gregory's genuine works is 17% in the *RP* (Brazzel, *Clausulae*, p. 63). In terms of the typologies used by Janson, *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin*, we find in the letter the following cadences: p4p (37), pp4p (33), p3p (33), pp3p (9), p3pp (6), others (37). Missing is the *p4pp*, which is frequently found in nearly all of Gregory's works (though I would argue this is probably not an intentional use of rhythm, but rather a feature of Gregory's word-choice; cf. n. 8 above): Pellegrini, "La prosa ritmica," 217–248, esp. 244.

[32] Kennell, *Ennodius*, pp. 205–6 and n. 162. Cf. Wyatt, "Ennodius and Pope Symmachus," p. 291: "in Dictio VI we have actually a first rough draft of the communication as it came from the hand of Ennodius. In the Letter [to the eastern bishops] we have the final form which it took after consultation and deliberation with the Pope himself and other advisors."

If the third letter of Pelagius II was a collaboration, it reminds us that Pope Gregory may have participated, at some stage, in those letters mainly drawn up by his helpers. It is certainly possible that in some cases Gregory gave notes—oral or written—to be drawn up into full letters, or revised letters that had already been composed. Yet this should not be taken too far in an attempt to minimize the contributions of his helpers. In the first case, subordinates would still be crafting the very words of the papacy: prose-rhythm requires very careful thought as to vocabulary, chosen specifically for the desired length of clauses and sentences, and as such the writer would need almost complete control over the contents of those sentences. In the second case, if Gregory inserted his own sentences into letters composed by others, they would stand out rhythmically—but most of the letters that employ prose-rhythm use it in almost every sentence, something that argues against his substantive participation.[33] Finally, as we saw above and will see further below, we have strong evidence that secretaries could write "whole-cloth" for other popes—Gregory was probably no exception.

To summarize, the popes of the 5th and 6th centuries, including Gregory, were not averse to employing others, even groups, to prepare correspondence. Typically these would be members of a special cadre of letter writers (often in the papal *scrinium*), who composed following certain rules of form and style, particularly in the consistent use of prose-rhythm. But even those who did not belong to this group could be asked to write, as Gregory's relatively unrhythmical letter for Pelagius II suggests. There could be many reasons for this: papal illness, as we would expect in the case of Gregory;[34] the impossibility of a very busy pope dictating each and every letter that went out in their name; or perhaps more significantly for us here, because of particular specializations or abilities of subordinates. Gregory's writing for Pelagius II may be an example of the last case: Pelagius II (or officials in his *scrinium*) recognized the failure of the first two letters, and sought out someone with impressive scriptural and theological knowledge, who was also well placed in Constantinople to access pertinent Greek materials. The pope, or other subordinates, however, may still have had a hand in the final product.

[33] On the consistency of prose-rhythm use in the "subordinate" letters, see the results of Norberg, cited above at nn. 13 and 14.

[34] Frederick Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great* (London, 1905), 1:243.

Gregory's Subordinates in the Papal Scrinium

All this leads us to wonder who Gregory's helpers were, and what their particular specialities might have been.[35] Norberg suggests that the deacon Boniface might have been one of those who wrote letters in Gregory's name: Boniface acted as a kind of "secretary of state", fielding questions from senior Church officials throughout Italy, writing letters in his own name and possibly also in the name of the pope.[36] The *consiliarius* Theodore may also have been one of Gregory's letter-writers. Theodore *consiliarius* is praised as *eloquentissimus* in *Reg.* 3.18, suggestive perhaps of his writing abilities, and two other letters hint that he may have been a legal advisor.[37] First, in a letter to Bishop Januarius of Sardinia, the pope advises his colleague to outline some of his troublesome legal cases to "our most cherished son Peter and Theodorus the *consiliarius*, so that after they explain things to us, whatever reason suggests (with the Lord's revelation) can be put in place"; Norberg suggests it may have been Theodore (and Peter) who would actually draft the reply.[38] The rhythm in this very letter, however, suggests that it was in fact composed by one of Gregory's subordinates, perhaps Peter or Theodore himself![39] Another case has Theodore examining a legal document for Gregory, a *cautio* relating to a certain Libertinus, and pronouncing the document *execrabilis*, lending support to the "legal advisor" idea.[40] Finally, as the quotation just above would hint, Peter—probably also the interlocutor of the *Dialogues*—was one of Gregory's most trusted friends, and it is not hard to imagine that Gregory, who entrusted Peter with a variety of diplomatic tasks, could also have employed him to write letters on particular topics.

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[35] On the abilities of papal functionaries generally, see Noble, "Literacy and the Papal Government in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *The Uses of Literarcy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 82–108.

[36] Norberg, "Style personnel," p. 494; cf. Richards, *Consul of God*, p. 76. Norberg points to the following phrase in *Reg.* 6.31 as evidence of Boniface's letter-writing: "hoc quod tibi filius noster diaconus bonifatius et uir magnificus maurentius chartularius scripsit sollicite attende" (CCSL 140:404), but this could be interpreted as Boniface and Maurentius sending a letter under their own names.

[37] *Reg.* 3.18 (CCSL 140:164).

[38] *Reg.* 9.11 (CCSL 140A:572–73). Norberg, "Style personnel," p. 495.

[39] Of eighteen sentence-ends in *Reg.* 9.11 (as edited by Norberg), I find six *cursus velox*, ten *cursus tardus*, two *cursus planus*: in short, every single sentence-end in this letter is formed according to strict rules of accentual prose-rhythm.

[40] *Reg.* 11.4 (CCSL 140A:862).

Even if we can only specifically identify a few of Gregory's possible ghost-writers, the abilities and training of all are manifest in the letters, and offer insights into the intellectual culture of the early medieval papacy.[41] The letter writers managed diverse situations that required good knowledge of canon and civil law, diplomacy, even military affairs.[42] Most significantly, Gregory seems to have entrusted his entire correspondence with Frankish royalty to his subordinates. In a revelation shocking on its own, Norberg noted that all the letters to Queen Brunhilda bear the rhythmical stamp of a secretary;[43] but if we examine the letters to Childebert II, Clothar II, Theodoric II and Theudebert II, we see that these were very likely all composed by subordinates as well.[44] Despite Gregory's hint (noted above) that his secretaries could only compose *in causis terrenis*, some of these letters deal very much with things *de animarum salute*: his letter of July 599 to Theodoric and Theudebert, for example, asks the kings to expunge simony from their realm and stop ordinations of laypeople as bishops, specifically warning against those who "out of impudence take it upon themselves to lead souls" ([*d*]*ucatum animarum impudenter assumunt*).[45] Even some of Gregory's famed letters to his beloved English conversion project may have been penned by a worthy subordinate.[46] That Gregory was happy to cede even important *de animarum salute* correspondence to others suggests he felt they understood the situation as well as or better than

[41] Cf. Noble, "The Intellectual Culture," pp. 179–213.

[42] For military knowledge, see for example *Reg.* 8.19, where Agnellus of Terracina is advised about keeping a strong watch at the city's walls. Every sentence-end in the letter conforms to the rules of accentual prose-rhythm.

[43] Norberg, "Style personnel," pp. 493–4. Norberg surveys the following letters to Brunhilda: *Registrum* [following CCSL 140/140A]: 6.5, 58, 60; 8.4; 9.213, 214; 11.46, 48, 49; 13.5. Banniard ("*Zelum discretione condire*", pp. 41–43) objects to Norberg's assignment of these letters to a subordinate. But one can freely doubt whether "une thématique banale d'exhortation morale", "une syntaxe à la fois bien chaînée et translucide", etc., are characteristics precise enough to argue for Gregorian authorship. Banniard (at n. 68) also cites the *mihi* (CCSL 140A:948.21) as evidence of personal composition—yet the letter of Pelagius II, largely composed by Gregory, uses a first-person singular pronoun in the very first line: "Virtutum mater caritas [...] me impulit" (MGH Epp. 2, pp. 449.24–25).

[44] To list briefly the results of my investigation: *Reg.* 6.6 (to Childebert), nine out of ten sentence-ends are main (*planus, tardus, velox*) forms of prose-rhythm; *Reg.* 6.51 (to Theodoric and Theudebert), seven out of seven; *Reg.* 9.216 (to Theodoric and Theudebert), tweny-six out of twenty-eight (92.9%); *Reg.* 9.227 (to Theodoric and Theudebert), seven out of seven; *Reg.* 11.47 (to Theodoric), six out of six; *Reg.* 11.50 (to Theudebert), seven out of seven; *Reg.* 11.51 (to Clothar) six out of six; *Reg.* 13.7 (to Theodoric), ten out of ten.

[45] *Reg.* 9.216 (CCSL 140A:778.50–1).

[46] E.g. *Reg.* 11.39, to Augustine (22 June, 601), where eight of nine sentence-ends (89%) contain one of the main three types of accentual rhythm.

himself; one wonders, especially in the case of the Franks, whether perhaps letter-writers had geographical remits as well as subject specializations.

In terms of style, Gregory's writers quietly upheld an older standard of Latinity—prose-rhythm, in a carefully and strictly devised form—that the pope had either abandoned or never learned. That they could do so implies that Gregory did not have strong feelings about the use of earlier, rhetorical systems of Latinity that were being used in his name: he was not afraid of the "old order" of Latinity, simply not interested in it.[47] And while most would argue that the letters personally composed by Gregory are by far the most artful, those put together by his helpers do not lack stylistic interest: alliteration, in particular, was sometimes trotted out to amuse the reader in routine letters.[48]

The letters produced by Gregory's papacy show him to have been an incredibly capable, intelligent ecclesiastical figure. But by looking very closely at the details of their composition, we can see that Gregory's success as pope—at the very highest level—was partially dependent on the work of other intelligent and educated men, whose training evinced the sublimation of late antique secular training into ecclesiastical office. Far from being the only competent cleric in Rome, Gregory seems to have been surrounded by others much like himself, though with a different skillset. He was the very obvious and capable face of a much larger, capable administration.

Papal Letter Writers in the 7th Century

Gregory's reliance on subordinates to manage particular business was ably continued by his successors in the 7th century. Popes like Honorius, Martin and Agatho seem to have had access to equally capable men during their pontificates, something that allows us to form a reasonably positive

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[47] Cf. Markus, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 39–40.

[48] E.g. *Reg.* 1.48, 1.67, and especially 2.12 (CCSL 140:99): "Et quia ecclesiam sanctae Mariae quae appellatur Pisonis, in tua positam parroechia, presbytero uacare cognouimus, praesentium portitorem Dominicum presbyterum in eadem ecclesia ut praeesse debeat . . .". Martyn's section on the style of Gregory's letters (*Letters of Gregory the Great*, 1:101–114) would seem to offer many further examples of the subordinates' style, given that Martyn lumps all the letters together. It is not clear whether he accepts or rejects Norberg's conclusions: cf. *Letters of Gregory the Great*, 1:13–14, where he considers the letters to be "an authentic production of [Gregory's] pontificate"; elsewhere he treats them mostly as personal compositions of Gregory.

impression of the city's cultural environment in the years immediately following Gregory.

Pope Honorius, who became pope twenty years after Gregory's death, is (in)famous for involving himself in the heated eastern debates over monothelitism, resulting in the dubious distinction of being formally condemned by an ecumenical council and his successor Pope Leo II.[49] This was occasioned by a letter sent to Sergius I, patriarch of Constantinople, who espoused the view that Christ had *one* divine will or operation (θέλημα), against the two wills (divine and human) position that would be recognized as orthodox. The letter expressed (understandable) impatience with the new Christological debate, saying "It is not our concern whether [...] we ought to consider or speak of deriving a single or dual operation [of Christ]; we leave such things to the grammarians, who are accustomed to selling the arcane terms they derive to children".[50] Those who received the letter, however, claimed that it made the fatal mistake of saying "we profess there [to be] one will of the Lord", thereby implicating the pope in the monothelite heresy.[51] What is sometimes less well remembered is that Pope Honorius did not really compose this letter at all—rather, it was the work of an abbot John *symponus*,[52] "who produced this [letter] by Latin dictation on [Honorius'] order", and claimed that the offending "one will" statement was added by those who translated the text into Greek, presumably in Constantinople.[53] Maximus Confessor also tells

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[49] On Honorius, see Anton Thanner, *Papst Honorius I (625–638)*, Studien zur Theologie und Geschichte 4 (St Ottilien, 1989), in which Talso provides German translations of his letters; Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 208–14; Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums* 2, pp. 523–6, 531–7, etc.; Jeffrey Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476–752* (London, 1979), pp. 179–83.

[50] PL 80:473C: "Utrum autem propter opera divinitatis et humanitatis, una, an geminae operationes debeant derivatae dici vel intelligi, ad nos ista pertinere non debent, relinquentes ea grammaticis, qui solent parvulis exquisita derivando nomina venditare." Philipp Jaffé and Paul Ewald, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum* (Leipzig, 1885) [= JE], no. 2018.

[51] PL 80:472A.

[52] The word *symponus* may be a name, or simply a descriptive "his helper", transliterating the Greek σύμπονος. Given that Anastasius' use of the term (see the note below) is based on a Greek letter, either is perfectly possible.

[53] *Diffloratio ex epistola s. Maximi ad Marinum*, found in Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Collectanea* (PL 129:572B–C): "[...] propter epistolam quae ab eo [sc. Honorio] fuerat ad Sergium scripta, percontans cujus rei gratia, vel qualiter in ea inserta fuerit una voluntas, et invenit haesitantes in hoc, et rationem reddentes; insuper et eum, qui hanc per jussionem ejus [sc. Honorii] Latinis tractaverit dictionibus, dominum videlicet abbatem Joannem sanctissimum symponum affirmantem, quod nullomodo mentionem in ea per numerum fecit unius omnimodis voluntatis: licet hoc nunc sit fictum ab his qui hanc in Graecam vocem interpretati sunt." Cf. the French translation in Claude-Marie Magnin,

us this same abbot John wrote the "Apology for Honorius" sent by Pope John IV in 641 to Constantine II.[54] Clearly it was quite acceptable to two of Gregory's successors to delegate the writing of crucial theological letters, very much within the category *de animarum salute*. Perhaps, however, this should be regarded as a sign of pragmatism and humility: Honorius and John recognized the importance of these matters, and realizing their own limits, delegated the task to their most suitable subordinate.

If Pelagius II, Gregory, Honorius, and John IV all issued letters written by capable subordinates, Martin I (649–53) went rather further, allowing an entire *council* to be issued in his name. This was the Lateran council of 649, convened, with the help of Maximus Confessor, to condemn the aforementioned Monothelite heresy.[55] The council was issued in both Greek and Latin, and it was long thought, despite some particularities in the latter, that the original text of the council was (mainly) Latin; this was logical because hardly any of the Italian participants in the council could have known Greek.[56] But the work of Rudolf Riedinger has well-

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La papauté considérée dans son origine, dans son développement au moyen age, et dans son état actuel (Paris, 1841), pp. 404–5. See also Anastasius Bibliothecarius' preface to his *Collectanea* (eds Ernst Perels and Gerhard Laehr, MGH Epp. 7 [Berlin, 1928], pp. 422–26, at 424): "non ignoremus docente sancto Maximo in epistola sua, quam Marino scripsit presbitero, sanctissimum hanc [epistulam Honorii] scripsisse Iohannem abbatem": trans. Bronwen Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs. The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius* (Turnhout, 2006), p. 153. Similar comments by Maximus Confessor in his *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* (PG 91:327–330).

[54] Maximus Confessor, *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* (PG 91:330): "Is igitur ipse [qui eam epistolam ex persona Honorii scripsit], cum ad sanctum Constantinum imperatorem, ex persona rursus sancti Joannis papae, de hac epistola scriberet, dixit [...]"; Maximus then summarizes John IV's letter. (This also shows that abbot John did not become John IV.) John IV's letter in question is JE 2042 (PL 80:602–607), surviving in retrograde Latin translation by Anastasius Bibliothecarius. Cf. Ertl, "Diktatoren," 71.

[55] On Maximus' and Martin's fate after the synod, see Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs*.

[56] See Erich Caspar, "Die Lateransynode von 649," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 51 (1932), 75–137; Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums* 2, pp. 553–61. Caspar's position was reasonably nuanced. He believed that *both* the Latin and the Greek were original, for their respective parts (i.e. the Greek transmitted parts conducted in Greek): "Die eingereichten Aktenstücke sind je in ihrer Originalsprache, lateinisch oder griechisch, aufgenommen und sogleich mit einer Version in der anderen Sprache versehen worden" (*Geschichte*, p. 554). Both were therfore also "authentic". But in the main, the original was Latin for Caspar, e.g. he points (554) to the Greek monks' request (ed. Rudolf Riedinger, *Concilium Lateranense a. 649 celebratum*, ACO ser. 2,1 [Berlin, 1984], pp. 55.30–33) that the discussions be translated into Greek, and concludes (p. 559) "Die Lateransynod von 649 stand mithin theologisch vollkommen unter griechischer Führung, wenn auch nach außen hin lauter Römer und Lateiner handelnd und redend auftraten." Cf. also Carlos Silva-Tarouca, "Nuovi studi sulle antiche lettere dei papi," *Gregorianum* 12 (1931), 49–56; Richards, *Popes and the Papacy*, p. 273.

nigh proven the seemingly unlikely contrary scenario: that the entire council text was composed in Greek and then translated into Latin.[57] Riedinger noted, for instance, that many of the Bible quotations in the Latin text are in fact retrograde translations from the Greek text, rather than following the Vulgate; there are errors where the Greek is correct, but the Latin provides a word that must come from a misreading of a Greek word for a visually-similar one; there are a few small Latin words (e.g. *quoniam, idipsud, propterea*) that are used extremely frequently and consistently not only in texts that were newly translated from Greek (i.e. quotations of Greek sources) but also in supposedly Latin-original texts, like the speeches of Pope Martin himself. One could hardly suppose that texts translated from Greek into Latin would share such uniformity in vocabulary with nearly every Latin speaker in the synod.[58] We are forced to accept that the original text of Martin's synod, even the encyclical letter, was Greek, composed almost certainly by Maximus Confessor and his Greek monks. The "council" itself may simply have been a gathering of the participants, who read a prepared script.[59] On its own, this outcome may seem shocking, but put in the context of the other popes we have been discussing, it is really only an extension of what had been happening before: allowing experts to write in the name of the pope.

Riedinger's conclusions are in the main quite sound, but I would argue that he has tried too hard to minimize the role of papal officials in the production of some of the synod's texts.[60] In short, even the well-known letter

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[57] Riedinger's publications on this subject are numerous. Most important of course is his edition, which contains a rather abbreviated version of his arguments for the Greek-to-Latin argument: Riedinger, ACO 2,1. The Greek-to-Latin revelation was first made in his *Lateinische Übersetzungen griechischer Häretikertexte des siebenten Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1979). See also his "Zwei Briefe aus den Akten der Lateransynode von 649," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980), 37–59; "Sprachschichten in der lateinischen Übersetzung der Lateranakten von 649," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 92 (1981), 180–203; "Die Lateransynode von 649 und Maximos der Bekenner," in *Maximus Confessor*, eds Felix Heinzer and Christoph von Schönborn (Freiburg, 1982), pp. 111–21; "Die Lateranakten von 649: ein Werk der Byzantiner um Maximos Homologetes," *Byzantina* 13 (1985), 517–34. See also the recent summation and analyses in Pietro Conte, *Il sinodo Lateranense dell'Ottobre 649*, Collezione Theologica 3 (Vatican, 1989), esp. pp. 31–38.

[58] Cf. Riedinger, "Sprachschichten in der lateinischen Übersetzung," 190.

[59] Conte, *Il sinodo Lateranense*, pp. 142–45; Riedinger, "Die Lateransynode von 649 und Maximos," p. 120.

[60] I will not address here the problem of the letters from the African bishops, which Riedinger argued to be the products of the Greeks despite having no characteristic vocabulary: "Sprachschichten in der lateinischen Übersetzung," p. 198; Riedinger, *Concilium Lateranense*, pp. XVII–III. Their use of Roman canonical collections would also seem to me to point to a member of the Roman clergy.

of Martin to Amandus of Maastricht (JE 2059), which informs the latter of the results of the synod and survives only in Latin, is argued by Riedinger to be the work of the Greek monks who translated the rest of the council into Latin.[61] This was on the strength of the presence of a few words (such as *propterea, quoniam*) and expressions that mark the work of the Greek translators in the rest of the 649 council text. And yet, this letter also bears the unmistakable stamp of the Roman *curia*: it strictly obeys the rules of Latin prose-rhythm. The three main rhythmical typologies (*tardus, planus, velox*) are found in 87% of the sentences in the letter to Amandus, a figure similar to other papal letters of the 7th century.[62] We also note that this letter uses some of the same tactics for achieving rhythm that characterize secretarial letters from Gregory's pontificate, e.g. final verbs like *cognoscimur* and *dinoscitur*.[63] But it does not seem that the Greek translators knew Latin prose-rhythm. Riedinger has shown decisively that the Latin version of the council's encyclical letter (JE 2058) must have been produced by the same Greek translators as the rest of the Latin council text: it contains a surfeit of the characteristic "translator words" (e.g. *quoniam, propterea, idipsud*), for example, and its biblical quotations are not from the Latin Vulgate but rather just translations of the biblical quotations in the Greek letter.[64] Yet this important letter, where we might expect to find prose-rhythm, has a much lower percentage of rhythmical forms than the letter to Amandus: only 58% of sentence-ends, while it also lacks the "rhythmical

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[61] Rudolf Riedinger, "Wer hat den Brief Papst Martins I an Amandus verfaßt?", *Filologia Mediolatina* 3 (1996), 95–104, where the evidence presented to link this letter to the rest of the council text is not of the highest quality, e.g. Riedinger cites the use of *pro qua re* as evidence of the Greek translators, since it is found fifteen times in the Latin council text—yet it is also found at least three times in the collection of papal documents in the *Liber Diurnus Romanorum pontificum*, ed. Theodore Sickel (Vienna, 1889). Cf. Riedinger, "Sprachschichten in der lateinischen Übersetzung," p. 200. The letter (JE 2059), which survives in Milo's *Vita Amandi*, is newly edited by Riedinger, *Concilium Lateranense*, pp. 422–24; older edition in *Vita Amandi Episcopi II*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SSRM 5 (Hannover, 1910), pp. 452–56.

[62] The calculation is my own, using Riedinger's text. The breakdown of cadences is as follows: nine *tardus*, four *planus*, eight *velox*, to make twenty-one out of twenty-four sentence-ends, hence 87.1%. For other papal letters, see my "Decline of the Cursus in the Papal Chancery," *Studi Medievali* 50 (2009), 1–40.

[63] Cf. Norberg, "Style personnel," p. 491.

[64] Rudolf Riedinger, "Die lateinischen Übersetzungen der Epistula Encyclica Papst Martins I (CPG 9403) und der Epistula Synodica des Sophronios von Jerusalem (CPG 7635)," *Filologia Mediolatina* 1 (1994), 45–69; cf. his earlier "Sprachschichten in der lateinischen Übersetzung," esp. 195, 198.

vocabulary" found in the Amandus letter.[65] Likewise, if we look at the Latin text of the third session of the council itself, even more securely the product of the Greek monks, we find the same low percentage (58%) of rhythmical forms.[66] Without going into more detail, this suggests that the Greek translators did not know Latin prose-rhythm, and though they certainly had some involvement in the letter to Amandus, they were probably helped by someone with a better knowledge of rhythm, most likely a member of the papal *curia*.[67]

Such a person would have needed to have been aware of the situation in north-western Europe, been capable in theology (to explain the import of the council), and probably have had some familiarity with Greek, so as to work effectively with the Greek translators. Such a person might have been abbot John, secretary for Honorius and John IV, though it is unclear whether John could write rhythmical Latin, or knew (or cared) anything about western European affairs.[68] A better possible candidate could be someone like Boniface, who was to become a trusted officer of the popes

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[65] Again, the calculation is my own, using Riedinger's text. The breakdown of cadences is as follows: eight *tardus*, four *planus*, six *velox*, to make eighteen out of thirty-one sentence-ends, hence 58.1%. One might object that translations from Greek into Latin would not be expected to be rhythmical. I would answer that Anastasius Bibliothecarius (amongst others, such as Rufinus) could translate into rhythmical Latin with considerable ease: note his retrograde Latin version of John IV's apology for Honorius (JE 2042, PL 80:602–607), where 80% of the sentence ends are one of the three main types. That this was retrograde, note Pietro Conte, *Chiesa e primato nelle lettere dei Papi del secolo VII* (Milan, 1971), pp. 427–29, no. 99, and Gerhard Laehr, "Die Briefe und Prologe des Bibliothekars Anastasius," *Neues Archiv* 47 (1928), 437–468, at 437. We find a similar rhythmicity in the retrograde translation of Honorius I's letter to Sergius (JE 2018), completed under Leo II (*c.*682): see my "The Decline of the Cursus," pp. 38–40 for the figures, and n. 68 below for the translation circumstances. Finally, note Bonifatius consiliarius' rhythmical translations from Greek, at nn. 74 and 75 below. The Greek monks could have translated into rhythmical Latin, therefore, if they had actually known prose-rhythm.

[66] My own calculation, using Riedinger's text. The breakdown of cadences is as follows: 42 *tardus*, 36 *planus*, 27 *velox*, for a total of 105 out of 181 sentence-ends, hence 58%.

[67] A Latinate collaborator for this letter was already suggested, on wholly different evidence, by Conte, *Il Sinodo Lateranense*, pp. 374–5, where one of Jonas' colleagues is posited, which is now perhaps unlikely because Jonas himself did not strongly favour prose-rhythm: see my "Paul, Paulinus and the Rhythm of Elite Latin", p. 93; more interesting is Conte, *Il Sinodo*, p. 374, n. 162, where (future pope) Donus is suggested. Cf. also Giuseppe Cremascoli, "Le Lettere di Martino I," in *Martino I e il suo tempo* (Spoleto, 1992), p. 245.

[68] Both the surviving letters abbot John "ghost-wrote" (JE 2018, for Honorius, and JE 2042, for John IV) survive only in retrograde translations: cf. Conte, *Chiesa e primato*, pp. 413–14, no. 53, and pp. 427–29, no. 99, who holds both to be retrograde Latin by Anastasius Bibliothecarius. It is more likely, however, that since Honorius' letter survives in the acts of the sixth ecumenical council, it was instead translated back into Latin under Leo II (*c.*682): see the *LP*, trans. Raymond Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs* (Liverpool, 2000), *c.*82.2,

of the later 7th century.[69] We know of Boniface, first of all, from Stephanus' *Life of Wilfrid of York* (d. *c.*709).[70] When Wilfred arrived in Rome *c.*654, he made friends with "Boniface the archdeacon, one of the wisest of the *consiliarii*", who taught young Wilfrid all about the four gospels, the calculation of Easter, and more.[71] When Wilfrid returned to Rome in 679–80, and a third time in 704, Boniface *consiliarius* seems to have been involved in sorting out Wilfrid's difficulties in England.[72] In between, Boniface *consiliarius* was sent again and again by Pope Benedict II (684–85) to attempt to convert the exiled heretic Macarius of Antioch, a task that would have required a good knowledge of Greek and theology.[73] Finally, it would seem that Boniface *consiliarius* translated Sophronius' *Miracula SS.Cyri et Iohannis* from Greek into Latin.[74] What is more, Boniface's Latin translation is almost as rhythmical as one of Gregory I's administrative

p. 80 and Rudolf Riedinger (ed.), *Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum Tertium*, ACO ser. 2,2,2 (Berlin, 1992), p. XV.

[69] On whom see Walter Berschin, "Bonifatius Consiliarius. Ein römischer Übersetzer in der byzantinischen Epoche des Papsttums," in *Lateinische Kultur im VIII. Jahrhundert*, eds Albert Lehner and Walter Berschin (St Ottilien, 1989), pp. 25–40; Benedetta Valtorta, *Clavis scriptorum Latinorum Medii aevi: auctores Italiae, 700–1000* (Florence, 2006), pp. 70–71.

[70] Ed. Bertram Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge, 1927); I have used the older edition by Wilhelm Levison, MGH SSRM 6 (Hannover, 1913), pp. 163–263.

[71] *Vita Wilfridi*, *c.*5 (ed. Levison, p. 198); Bede, *HE*, 5.19 (ed. Charles Plummer [Oxford, 1896], p. 324).

[72] When Wilfrid returned to Rome in 704, Boniface was present at a council where Wilfrid sought restitution for being expelled from his see; Boniface is also said to have recognized him from his earlier visit during the days of Pope Agatho: *Vita Wilfridi*, *c.*5 (ed. Levison, p. 248); Bede, *HE*, 5.19 (ed. Plummer, p. 328), where Boniface is described more specifically as *consiliarius apostolici papae*. There is also a leaden bull of Boniface surviving from Whitby, which further underlines the connexion between Wilfrid and Boniface: it is now in the Whitby museum (reference # WHITM:ARC1028). The obverse reads BONIFATII and the reverse ARCHIDIAC: my thanks to Denise Gildroy at the museum for photographs of the seal.

[73] *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum* (ACO ser. 2,3,1, p. 93): "Romae in exilio erat Macarius hereticus a sexta synodo missus. Et quadraginta dies dedit ei spatium sanctae memoriae pater noster papa Benedictus, et per singulos dies mittebat ad eum Bonifatium consiliarium suum et commonitoriis uerbis docebat eum ex diuina scriptura [...]".

[74] Anastasius Bibliothecarius says in his preface to his dossier on Cyrus and John: "Quorum [sc. Cyri et Iohannis] videlicet miraculorum bonifacius consiliarius, ad petitum theodori primicerii defensorum ecclesie romane, duodecim cum prefacione capitula olim interpretatus est": ed. Berschin, "Bonifatius Consiliarius," p. 39 (also found in MGH Epp. 7, pp. 426–27). Since Anastasius subsequently translated the rest of the miracles (to make a total of seventy), we cannot know at the moment whether Boniface translated the first twelve of the seventy: but if we assume this is the case, Boniface's contribution is found in PG 87:3387–422 (the preface) and 3423–62 (the first twelve miracles).

letters.[75] If all these are the same Boniface *consiliarius*—and why not, given that Wilfred himself lived this timespan—then someone with his qualifications would have been ideal to help the Greek translators draft the Amandus letter: in particular, he would have had better knowledge of affairs in north-western Europe. Although we have no specific evidence of such involvement, his existence speaks well of the abilities of Roman papal bureaucrats at this time, and makes it more imaginable that a Roman cleric could have helped the Greek translators, even if it was not Boniface precisely.

Conclusion

Careful study of Latin prose-rhythm shows that Gregory's papacy continued the standard practice of employing letterwriters, even if he has a deserved reputation as an extremely active pope, and that his successors continued this tradition long after his death.[76] Perhaps the wisdom of such a system is illustrated by Gregory's own long periods of illness. In any case, it warns us to remember the limits of what we can say about Gregory's activities personally, or indeed about other popes of the 6th or 7th centuries. It is clear that the popes of this period had already realized that their duties were too important, too diverse, and perhaps too difficult to be accomplished primarily by one man. As such, we should be careful to remember that a pope (even Gregory), when writing in an official capacity, is not an "author" like other authors. But their ability to find and employ the best men (that they could find) is certainly cause for optimism about their judgement and their organizational abilities.

In terms of literary abilities, Gregory's failure to use prose-rhythm in his writings and personal letters could be misused to uphold the old argument that Gregory (and his era) was either hostile to, or ignorant of, classical learning, encapsulated in Rand's claim that Gregory "would throw

[75] Based on my own analysis, to be published in full elsewhere. In brief, the results are for the preface (PG 87:3379–87): of 37 sentence-ends we find 12 *planus*, 8 *tardus*, 9 *velox*, for a total of 29 rhythmical forms (80.3%); for *Miracula* I–II (PG 87:3423–54C): of 163 sentence-ends we find 17 *planus*, 72 *tardus*, 45 *velox*, for a total of 134 rhythmical forms (82.2%).

[76] One might have extended the treatment beyond Martin, for example to Anastasius Bibliothecarius and his work for Nicholas I, Hadrian II, and John VIII, on which see Ertl, "Diktatoren", 83–128; Ernst Perels, *Papst Nikolaus I. und Anastasius bibliothecarius* (Berlin, 1920).

the [classical] past away".[77] It is certainly true that the traditional Roman education had lost much of its currency by Gregory's day: "education was no longer a channel to advancement" in civil government,[78] and there was no requirement for Christians (or even bishops) to be traditionally educated.[79] Nonetheless, recent scholarship shows that it still had a (limited) influence on him.[80] The lack of rhythm in Gregory's writings does warn us, however, against going too far in the other direction, and "making Gregory a humanist after making him a barbarian".[81] It certainly gives us further reason to reject the claim that Gregory was studying rhetoric as pope, which was perhaps more doubtful than his supposed ability to read Greek literature or his familiarity with Stoic philosophers.[82]

Our exploration of the work of papal subordinates also shows that making generalizations about 6th-century Rome solely on the basis of Gregory would be a mistake. While the old schools, with their focus on oratory and poetry, no longer held sway in Rome, the traditions they upheld had

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[77] E.g. Ferdinand Lot, *La fin du monde antique et le début du moyen âge* (Paris, 1951), p. 430; other references usefully gathered by Paul Riché, *Éducation et culture dans l'Occident barbare* (Paris, 1962), p. 187. Quotation from Edward Kenneth Rand, *Founders of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1928; repr. 1957), p. 250.

[78] For the quotation, Nicholas Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c.568–774* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 35, and cf. Thomas S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy A.D. 554–800* (London—Rome, 1984).

[79] Robert Kastner, *Guardians of Language: the Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 86, who notes Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 2.14.21 (ed. Roger P.H. Green [Oxford, 1995], p. 80) on Christians not knowing the Latin *auctores*; and Augustine, *Ep.* 101.1 (ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 34.2 [Vienna, 1898], p. 540) on Possidius' lack of liberal training. For bishops lacking traditional education, cf. Augustine, *Ep.* 34.6 (CSEL 34.2: 26–27).

[80] Riché, *Éducation*, pp. 187–200, 212–19; Markus, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 34–40. See also John Moorhead's contribution to this volume.

[81] Ubaldo Pizzani, "S. Gregorio Magno, Cassiodoro e le arti liberali," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo Tempo* (Rome, 1991), pp. 121–36, at 121.

[82] For his supposed rhetorical studies, see Martyn, *Letters of Gregory the Great*, 1:2, 102–3. This argument rests on the following passage *Ep.* 5.53a (eds Paul Ewald and Ludwig Hartmann, MGH Epp. 1 [Berlin, 1891], ch. 5, p. 357): "Nam dum molestia corpus atteritur, affecta mente etiam dicendi studia languescunt." Cf. Martyn, 2:384: "... even my studies of rhetoric are languishing". The phrase *studia/studium dicendi* most often means "desire to speak", as it probably does here, not the "studies of rhetoric" presented by Martyn. For *studium dicendi*, as "desire to speak", see Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps. 38*, 3 (PL 36:414): "aliquando perturbata studio dicendi"; Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum*, ch. 12, (ed. Roland Demeulenaere, CCSL 64 [Turnhout, 1985], p. 89). For Stoicism, see Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 2 (Leiden, 1990), pp. 253–66, *contra* Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 15 n. 58. For Greek, I point to the reversal by Joan Petersen, who once argued strongly for Gregory's knowledge of Greek: "Homo omnino Latinus? The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great," *Speculum* 62 (1987), 529–51.

nonetheless been maintained in subtle ways.[83] We have only a sketchy idea of the preparation enjoyed by clerics in Rome in the 6th and 7th centuries.[84] Certainly, the complexity of the various offices already found in Gregory's time (see Neil's chapter, *infra*) would suggest relatively formalized systems of education were necessary.[85] Given what we have explored above, it seems clear that some clerics received training in a variety of fields. That the *consiliarius* and archdeacon Boniface, whose name suggests a Latin origin, could learn Greek suggests that despite Gregory's relative ignorance of the language, there were still ways for Latins to study Greek in Rome.[86] The continued use of prose-rhythm, on the other hand, in a variety of papal writings hints that fundamental features of late antique, baroque Latin style were preserved as part of the training of papal officials. It is clear that Gregory's weakness in these areas should not be understood, therefore, as a complete breakdown of educational traditions and preferences. If anything, his inabilities point to a subtle irony: that the Roman aristocracy, which produced Gregory and was the guardian of liberal education since time immemorial, may have given up on some of these traditions even as the Church was carefully preserving them. But even here we must be cautious: Gregory was certainly not the only former aristocrat within the Church hierarchy, and his *consiliarius* Theodore, the legal expert, may well have been a layman.[87]

The abilities of both Gregory and the papal subordinates argue against the temptation of seeing 7th-century Rome as a cultural "new world" formed by momentous political and social changes. Instead, this was a time of subtle transformation, where the traditions of the past still had influence but in a way much quieter than before, such that the inattentive listener risks thinking they had vanished. What threatens to blind us to this continuity is the much more obvious theological abilities of Gregory, abbot John, or Bonifatius *consiliarius*, and their thinking certainly owed more to Augustine than to Virgil. But Gregory's writings were couched in

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[83] Though restoration of schools is called for by Justinian, *Sanctio Pragmatica* 22 [= *Novellae*, App. 7.22] (ed. Rudolf Schöll, Corpus Iuris Civilis, 3 [Berlin, 1895], p. 802), but see Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, pp. 6–7, *et passim* on the Sanction's effects. On the meagre evidence for secular instruction in Rome after 550, see Riché, *Éducation*, pp. 182–87.

[84] See Riché, *Éducation*, pp. 215–19, 393–400; Thomas F.X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter* (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 228–30; Noble, "Literacy and the Papal Government," esp. pp. 97–106.

[85] Cf. Noble, "Literacy and the Papal Government," p. 104.

[86] For "Boniface" as a Latin name, note the entries in *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, ed. John Martindale, 3a (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 237–38.

[87] Richards, *Popes and the Papacy*, p. 299.

forms taken almost unconciously from the classical world that was well-known to Boethius and Augustine (see Moorhead, *infra*), just as Martin I's letter to Amandus was couched in traditional rhythmical Latin. Gregory may have been to sea upon the stormy waves of papal business, but he did not row alone—and nor were "the fields of rhetoric and poetry"[88] completely lost to his sight, and especially not to that of his oarsmen.

[88] The quotation is an allusion to Ennodius, *Opusc.* 5 (ed. Friedrich Vogel, MGH AA 7 [Berlin, 1885], p. 301), where the author laments youthful days wasted in the fields of rhetoric.

PART 4

RECEPTION

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE LEGACY OF GREGORY THE GREAT IN THE LATIN WEST

Constant J. Mews and Claire Renkin

Gregory the Great, the first monk to become pope, was such an admired figure in the Latin West that it is not easy to delineate the extent of his influence. Revered as the last of the great Latin fathers of the Church, there was scarcely a library, whether monastic or non-monastic, that did not have a reasonable collection of his writings. His popularity undoubtedly had much to do with the accessibility of his writing. He was not a philologist like Jerome or an argumentative theologian like Augustine, and never composed polemical treatises against any specific individual. Some might find inspiration in the serious tone of his *Moralia* on Job, a virtuous gentile unfamiliar with the Law of Moses, a work in which he reflects on the trials of life. Others might prefer the more conversational character of his four books of *Dialogues* with Peter the Deacon about the miraculous lives and visions of charismatic monks in Italy, Book 2 of which is totally devoted to St. Benedict, or his *Homilies on the Gospels* in which he explored exemplary figures in the gospels. Popes and ecclesiastical administrators might focus on his correspondence or his *Pastoral Care* as providing guidance on how a bishop should attend to the needs of his flock. Some imagined him as the archetypal pontiff, who established the authoritative text and music of both the Mass and divine office. For many, Gregory became a symbol of papal authority, whose image could easily be manipulated. For those who studied his writings, however, he was an inspirational preacher, able to use vivid images to illuminate the transitory nature of human experience and our longing for the divine, manifest through penitence of the heart.

Whereas much has been written about Augustine's contested influence on Christian theology, much less attention has been given to analysing Gregory's pervasive impact on the literature and art of medieval Christendom.[1] The popularity of Gregory's writings is borne out by the

[1] See however Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr., Kees Dekker, David F. Johnson (eds), *Rome and the North: the Early Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe* (Paris—Leuven, 2001).

number of vernacular translations made of his writings in the Middle Ages: his *Dialogues* and *Pastoral Care* into Old English by the late 9th century;[2] the *Moralia* into an Old German paraphrase by the 11th century;[3] the *Dialogues* into Old French by the 12th century;[4] the *Homilies on the Gospels* into Norse-Icelandic by 1150;[5] the *Dialogues* into Middle Dutch in the 13th century.[6] The list can doubtless be much extended. By focusing on the spiritual life more than on conceptual or exegetical questions, Gregory's writings, deeply impregnated with ascetic values deriving from Greek tradition, helped shape the character of Latin Christianity in a way that was quite distinct from the philological focus of Jerome or Augustine's emphasis on the lingering effects of original sin and human dependence on divine grace. Gregory drew on this ascetic tradition to show how scripture could be read not just as a body of doctrine, but as a way of helping to re-shape one's life.

Gregory's Reputation Prior to 780

Gregory's preaching and homilies on scripture circulated quickly in Italy, even during his lifetime, among those committed to asceticism. In a let-

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Carole Straw notes a few other studies of Gregory's influence (notably those of Wasselynck, n. 9 below) at the close of a bibliographical essay in her volume, *Gregory the Great. Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 266. See also Gillian R. Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 143–5.

[2] Hans Hecht, ed., *Bischof Waerferth von Worcester Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, 2 vols (Darmstadt, 1900; repr. 1965); Henry Sweet, ed., *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, 2 vols, Early English Texts Society, 45, 50 (London, 1871–72; repr. Oxford, 1958); see Kees Dekker, "King Alfred's Translation of Gregory's *Dialogi*: Tales for the Unlearned?" in *Rome and the North*, eds Bremmer et al., pp. 27–50.

[3] R. Priebsch, "Eine Ausspruch Gregors des Grossen in ahd. Reimversen aus S. Maximim zu Trier," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 38 (1912–13), 338–43; see Brian Murdoch, "Using the Moralia: Gregory the Great in Early Medieval German," in *Rome and the North*, eds Bremmer et al., pp. 189–206.

[4] Wendelin Foerster (ed.), *Li dialoge Gregoire lo Pape: altfranzosische Übersetzung des XII. Jahrhunderts der Dialogen des Papstes Gregor* (Amsterdam, 1965). See also Sven Sandqvist (ed.), *Le Dyalogue Saint Gregore: les Dialogues de saint Grégoire le grand traduits en vers français à rimes léonines par un Normand anonyme du XIVe siècle* (Lund, 1989); and Olle Sandvist (ed.), *La vie Saint Gregor: poème normand du XIVe siecle, publié avec introduction, notes et glossaire* (Lund, 1989). See also Martine Pagan (ed.), *Le Pastoralet. Traduction médiévale française de la Regula Pastoralis; édition critique du manuscrit 868 de la Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon* (Paris, 2007).

[5] Kirsten Wolf, "Gregory's Influence on Old Norse-Icelandic Religious Literature," in *Rome and the North*, eds Bremmer et al., pp. 255–74.

[6] Geert H.M. Claassens, "Gregory's *Dialogi* in Middle Dutch Literature," in *Rome and the North*, eds Bremmer et al., pp. 207–38.

ter to John, subdeacon of Ravenna, written in January 602, he hints at the problems brought by the fame that his writings had already achieved. Claudius, an abbot of Ravenna, had taken down comments on the Prophets, the Books of Kings, Proverbs, and the Song of Songs, but in a way that disregarded his original intention. In the same letter, Gregory complained that Bishop Marinianus had his *Moralia* on Job read out in public at vigils, when "it was not a work for the general public, and it produces an obstacle rather than assistance for ill-educated listeners."[7] He suggested that a commentary on the psalms would have been more helpful. Even more embarrassing was his fear that its text was faulty. Gregory was similarly upset that a copy of his *Liber Pastoralis*, intended for the edification of bishops, had been given to the emperor and that a translation into Greek had already been produced, that he had not been able to check.[8]

The vast number of surviving copies of the *Moralia in Iob* (over 500, not counting the many abbreviations made of the work) attests to its enduring popularity, even beyond the heyday of its influence within monastic circles in the 11th and 12th centuries.[9] Gregory's method of identifying three levels of interpretation—the historical foundation of Job's life, its allegorical significance as foreshadowing that of Christ, and its significance as a guide to behaviour (*moralitas*)—was of enormous influence in shaping medieval exegetical tradition. The term *Moralia* that he chose for the work had been much used by Ambrose, but not Augustine, who had been very critical of a commentary on Job produced in the 5th century by Julian of Eclanum, a supporter of the British monk, Pelagius, for emphasising human effort rather than divine grace.[10] While Gregory never sided with the extreme arguments attributed to Pelagius, he was closer to Cassian than Augustine in the way that he combined emphasis on both free will and grace and avoided invoking the notion of original

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[7] Gregory the Great, *Reg.* 12.6, trans. John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, 3 vols (Toronto, 2004), 3:811 (CCSL 140A:975): "... quia non est illud opus populare et rudibus auditoribus impedimentum magis quam prouectum generat."

[8] Ibid. (CCSL 140A:976).

[9] See the list of MSS given by Marc Adriaen in the introduction to his edition of the *Moralia in Iob* (CCSL 143:xix–xxix), and the studies of René Wasselynck, "Les compilations des Moralia in Job du VIIe au XIIe siècle," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 29 (1962), 5–32 and "L'influence de l'exégèse de S. Grégoire le grand sur les commentaires bibliques médiévaux (VIIe–XII s.)," ibid. 32 (1965), 157–204.

[10] Julian of Eclanum, *Expositio libri Iob* (ed. Lucas de Coninck, CCSL 88 [Turnhout, 1988]).

sin, except to say that it had been wiped away in baptism.[11] Although Cassian incurred criticism from fervent Augustinians like Prosper of Aquitaine and the author of the influential *Decretum Gelasianum*, falsely attributed in the early 6th century to Pope Gelasius I, his writings were still revered by monks in the 5th and 6th centuries, notably by Benedict of Nursia, who anticipated Gregory in combining an ascetic example with respect for Roman stability.[12] Although Augustine had introduced a new awareness of human frailty and continuing dependence on divine grace, Gregory combined Stoicism with an ascetic tradition shaped by Ambrose and Origen, which emphasized how prayers, penance, and intercession of the righteous could help bridge the gulf between man and God. Through their action, the penitent could be helped to achieve union with God.

Gregory's support for asceticism did not meet universal favour in the Roman Church. His promotion of monks to positions of influence may explain the relatively brief and muted account of his life in the *Liber pontificalis*, a collection of papal biographies that reflects the viewpoint of senior clergy at the Lateran, the mother church of Rome.[13] According to a tradition transmitted by John the Deacon in the period immediately following Gregory's death, while famine was raging, certain people in Rome started to burn his writings, accusing him of plundering the papal treasury (presumably because he was more concerned with feeding the poor than building new churches). Peter the Deacon responded by observing that such action was useless as his writings were already being widely copied, and that he had seen the Holy Spirit speak to him in the form of a dove.[14] In the early 8th century, the anonymous Whitby author of the first known *Life of Gregory* reported a similar story in relation to a dove appearing while he composed the homilies on Ezekiel. The Whitby author claims that Gregory was so critical of the way his successor, Sabinian (604–08), neglected the poor that he warned him through visions and eventually

[11] Straw, *Gregory the Great. Perfection in Imperfection*, pp. 139–40. Straw's analysis differs from that of Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great*, pp. 71–72, who emphasizes the influence of Augustine on Gregory.

[12] See for example Rebecca Hardin Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency. A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon, GA, 1996) and Richard Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian. Aristocrats, Asceticism and Reformation in Fifth-century Gaul* (Oxford, 2007).

[13] *LP pars prior* 66, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH (Berlin, 1898), pp. 161–62; trans. R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs* (Liber pontificalis). *The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, 2nd ed. (Liverpool, 2000), p. 63.

[14] John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* (PL 75:221D–22A).

caused his death by kicking his successor in the head.[15] By contrast, the *Liber pontificalis* praises Sabinian for "filling the Church from the clergy"—a phrase that can only make sense as a silent rebuke to Gregory's policy of promoting monks. While Boniface IV (608–15) is mentioned as supporting a monastic way of life, Deusdedit (615–18) is singled out more enthusiastically as a pope who "loved the clergy much, and recalled priests and clergy to their former places."[16] The Whitby *Life* (which survives in a single copy) and the *Liber pontificalis* provide opposing views on the continuing tension between monastic and clerical forces during the early decades of the 7th century.

Gregory's reputation was promoted with particular zeal by monastic friends and correspondents far away from Rome, like Leander, archbishop of Seville (*c.*534–*c.*601), to whom he dedicated his *Moralia* on Job in 584. Leander's younger brother, Isidore (*c.*560–636), would influentially present Gregory as equal to Augustine in reputation.[17] Not all of Gregory's writings circulated quickly. The fact that the *Dialogues*, presented as recording his conversations with Peter the Deacon about the ascetic fathers in Italy, are not mentioned by Isidore or in the earliest recension of the *Liber pontificalis* has been used by Clark as evidence for the work not having been composed until the 670s (expanding on otherwise unknown authentic writings of Gregory).[18] Yet these omissions make more sense as reflecting the work's slow diffusion, a process that Clark correctly observes. Sometime in the 630s, Taio of Saragossa travelled to Rome to find a copy of Gregory's *Moralia* that had once been sent to Leander, but could no longer be located. He reports that he found what he was looking for not in

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[15] *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* 26 and 28 (ed. Bertram Colgrave [Lawrence, KA, 1968], pp. 122, 124–26).

[16] *LP* 67–71, trans. Davis, pp. 64–65 (ed. Mommsen, pp. 163, 166): "Hic [Sabinianus] ecclesia de clero implevit. . . . [Deusdedit] sacerdotes et clerum ad loca pristina revocavit."

[17] Isidore, *Carmina* 13 (ed. José Maria Sanchez Martin, CCSL 113A [Turnhout, 2000], p. 225): "Quantum Augustino clares tu Hippone magistro / Tantum Roma suo praesule Gregorio."

[18] Isidore, *De viris illustribus* (PL 83:1102A–03A). Francis W. Clark argued that the references to the *Dialogues* in *LP* were a subsequent addition in *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1987), pp. 54–58 and summarized in *The 'Gregorian' Dialogues and the Origins of Benedictine Monasticism* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 209–10. For further discussion of the diffusion of the *Dialogues*, see *inter alia*: Francis W. Clark, "Searching for St. Benedict in the Legacy of St. Gregory the Great," *Peritia* 17–18 (2003–04), 110–20; Matthew Dal Santo, "The Shadow of a Doubt? A Note on the *Dialogues* and *Registrum Epistolarum* of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604)," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61 (2010), 3–17; Constant J. Mews, "Gregory the Great, the Rule of Benedict and Roman Liturgy: the Evolution of a Legend," *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011), 125–44.

the papal archive, but at St. Peter's, after Gregory had spoken to him in a vision.[19] This implies that Gregory's writings were more known to the monks who served the basilica of St. Peter, just outside the city, than at the Lateran. Perhaps as a consequence of Taio's discovery, an Iberian monk consciously imitated the *Dialogues*—a work he described as written by an author inflamed by the Holy Spirit—by writing *c.*633–38 the *Lives of the Fathers of Merida*, demonstrating that Spain could produce charismatic saints as much as Italy.[20] The *Dialogues* were also included by Paterius, a secretary of Gregory, in an anthology of writings produced sometime in the early 7th century.[21] These early allusions to the *Dialogues* are less likely to be a complex set of forgeries (as Clark maintained) than evidence of its being transmitted in monastic circles, initially by Peter the Deacon at St. Peter's, but not at the Lateran.[22] The *Dialogues* diffuse an image of heroic miracle-working saints throughout Italy, just as Cassian's *Conferences* transmitted the teaching of those desert fathers in Egypt who provided an alternative to clerical authority by the example of their lives.

Gregory's writings were also circulating in Ireland from an early date. His *Dialogues* were certainly known to Adamnán (d. 703) in his *Life of Columba*.[23] More work is needed to establish whether they influenced the *Lives* of other Irish saints, the exact date of which is uncertain. Our earliest evidence of Gregory's work reaching Ireland is an abbreviation of the *Moralia* (that focused more on allegorical rather than moral interpretations) by Lathcen (d. 661), a monk of Clonfertmulloe in southern Ireland.[24]

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[19] For Taio's account of his journey to Rome, see *De inventione librorum Moralium Sancti Gregorii* (PL 75:507–08); *Eugenii Toletani episcopi, epistulae* (ed. F. Vollmer, MGH AA 14 [Berlin, 1905], pp. 87–90).

[20] *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeratensium* (ed. A. Maya Sánchez, CCSL 116 [Turnhout, 1992]). Clark, *The 'Gregorian Dialogues'*, pp. 331–53 argues that the work dates from no earlier than the 670s, possibly later, without knowledge of the dating to the 630s confirmed by Maya-Sanchez.

[21] Paterius, *Liber Testimoniorum* (PL 79:683–916); see René Wasselynck, "Les compilations des Moralia in Job," 5–9.

[22] That Peter the Deacon was attached to St. Peter's is suggested by a report that Pope Eugenius III, a Cistercian pope, was buried with him in the same tomb, according to the *Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae* (eds Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti, *Codice topografico della città di Roma*, vol. 3 [Rome, 1946]), p. 389.

[23] On this influence of the *Dialogues*, see T.M. Charles-Edwards, "The Structure and Purpose of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*," in *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, Lawmaker, Peacemaker*, eds Jonathan Wooding with Rodney Aist, Thomas Owen Clancy, and Thomas O'Loughlin (Dublin, 2000), pp. 205–18.

[24] Lathcen, *Egloga* (ed. Marc Adriaen, CCSL 145 [Turnhout, 1969]); see Wasselynck, "Les compilations des Moralia in Job," 11–14 and Marina Smyth, *Understanding the Universe in Seventh-century Ireland* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1996), pp. 14–15, observing that he could

The founder of that abbey, Molua, composed a Rule that was reportedly shown to Gregory in Rome, earning his respect. His biographer claims that such was the bond between the two men that Molua knew in a vision when Gregory was made pope, while Gregory was shown in a vision when Molua himself passed away.[25] Several other Irish monks are recorded as visiting Gregory in Rome, some several times: Abban, ordained by Gregory; Barra, first bishop of Cork; and Lasrén of Leighlin, whom Gregory reportedly made an apostolic legate.[26] A detail of how St. Carthage (d. 637) visited Molua carrying two books in *scethas* (a rare word for book-satchels, deriving from Greek terminology) hints at how book learning began to spread in Ireland, stimulated by such contacts with Rome.[27] St. Carthage, a friend of Comgall of Bangor (who ordained Molua), is reported as wanting to travel to Rome during the 590s, although nothing is said about his ever having succeeded in this goal.[28] The *Moralia*, along with certain writings of Augustine, were used by an Irish monk (himself called Augustine) within the *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*, dedicated in 655 to various churches, including that founded by St. Carthage at Lismore, *c.*635/6.[29] This work, the first biblical commentary produced in Ireland, integrated the scientific learning implicit in the *Moralia*, as well as of Augustine, into its presentation of scripture. Gregory, the only pope to be identified by

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also be the author of an anonymous commentary on the *Catholic Epistles* (ed. Robert E. McNally, *Scriptores Hiberniae Minores* 1, CCSL 108B [Turnhout, 1973], pp. 1–50).

[25] *Vita S. Moluae* 40, 47, 54 (ed. Charles H. Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae* [=*VSH*], 2 vols [Oxford, 1910; repr. Dublin, 1997], 2:220, 222, 225); *Vita prior S. Lugidi seu Moluae* 47, 64, 69 (ed. William W. Heist, *VSH ex codice Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi* [Brussels, 1965], pp. 220, 222, 225). A similar story is told about Colman of Lann Elo, who was ordained by Molua, and who saw in a vision the death of Gregory, confirmed a year later by a monk who came back to Ireland from Rome, *Vita S. Colmani* (ed. Plummer, *VSH* 1:264–65).

[26] *Vita S. Abbani* 17–20 (ed. Plummer, *VSH* 1:13–16); *Vita S. Barri* 10 (ed. Plummer, *VSH* 1: 69): "Post hoc pervenit famulus Dei Barrus ad virum sanctum predictum, et apud eum legit euangelium secundum Matheum apostolum, et regulas ecclesiasticas, sicut ille a Gregorio papa accepit et didicit." *Vita S. Lasriani* 1 and 7–8 (ed. Heist, pp. 340–2). John R.C. Martyn identifies various letters of Gregory sent after 592 which he thinks may be connected to Ireland, and to Columbanus in particular, "Pope Gregory the Great and the Irish," *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 1 (2005), 65–83.

[27] *Vita S. Carthagi* 18 (ed. Plummer, *VSH* 1:177) and *Vita S. Colmani* 24 (ed. Heist, p. 217), fuller than the shortened form in *Vita sancti Colmani* 18 (ed. Plummer, *VSH* 1:270). On this terminology, see Richard Sharpe, "Latin and Irish words for 'book-satchel'," *Peritia* 4 (1985), 152–56.

[28] *Vita S. Carthagi* 2 (ed. Plummer, *VSH* 1:170).

[29] "Venerandissimis urbium et monasteriorum Episcopis et Presbyteris, maxime Carthaginensium, Augustinus..." (PL 35:2149–200). See Smyth, *Understanding the Universe*, pp. 11–12, 23, 26, 54, 138–41.

name in the Irish saints' *Lives*, indirectly promoted the flowering of literacy in 7th-century Ireland.

The fact that Gregory made only passing reference to the *Rule* of Benedict in his *Dialogues*, never mandating its observance, reflects his awareness of the multitude of monastic rules then in circulation. Initially, Benedict's *Rule* was combined with others, such as that of Columbanus (*c.*543–615), who left Comgall's foundation at Bangor *c.*590 to establish many significant abbeys in Gaul and northern Italy, notably Luxeuil and Bobbio. Through his influence, the abbey of Fleury was founded *c.*630, according to a later witness, as a place where monks could live "according to the Rule of the most holy Benedict and lord Columbanus."[30] Yet Benedict's reputation, and thus Gregory's authority, started to be transformed *c.*660, when its abbot, Mommulus, commissioned another monk, Aiulf, to acquire the remains of Benedict and Scholastica from the abandoned foundation at Monte Cassino. While the monks of Fleury would remember this theft as a heroic gesture, they were accused of committing sacrilege in letters attributed to Pope Vitalian (658–72). Pope Zacharias (*c.*741–52) later repeated his demand for their return.[31] The official view maintained at Monte Cassino, however, at least by the 8th century, was to deny that Benedict's relics had ever been taken. The enduring controversy between the two abbeys over who held Benedict's remains illustrates how monks in both Gaul and Italy were keen to present themselves as promoting the vision of Gregory the Great.

Gregory was accorded particular reverence in 7th-century England because of his role in promoting its evangelization through monks sent from Rome, in particular to Augustine of Canterbury. English monks, who

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30 "in quo monachi iuxta regulam sanctissimi Benedicti et domni Columbani consistere debeant." *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire* (eds M. Prou and A. Vidier, 2 vols [Paris, 1900–37], 1:5).

31 Vitalian, *Epp.* 6–9 (PL 187:1005D–08A); Philipp Jaffé and Wilhelm Wattenbach, *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1885), 1:236–7, nos. 2099–2103, reprinted by way of Giovanni Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence, 1759–98), 11:21–2, from *Epitome chronicarum Casinensium* (attributed to Anastasius the Librarian), ed. Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Rerum Italicarum scriptores 2/1 (Milan, 1723), pp. 355–56, from an unknown manuscript. While the authenticity of these letters of Vitalian has been questioned, because they occur within a clearly fictitious account of how the relics were returned to Monte Cassino in the 8th century, the fact that they run counter to traditions at both Fleury and Monte Cassino argues against their having been forged by one or other abbey. Jacques Hourlier, "La lettre de Zacharie," *Studia monastica* 21 (1979), 241–52 argues that the letter of Pope Zachary, which repeats the claims attributed to Vitalian, is authentic. For further discussion of the complex bibliography surrounding this debate, see Mews, "Gregory the Great, the Rule of Benedict," 131–32.

dominated cathedral cloisters to an extent never found on the continent, preserved particular respect for Gregory, recalling the feast of his priestly ordination, as well as his feast day.[32] In 667, Pope Vitalian sent holy relics of Gregory, Peter, and Paul, to Oswiu of Northumbria, to affirm respect for Roman authority, just after the synod of Whitby had declared in favour of its liturgical practices over those favoured by many Celtic churches, especially in the northern parts of Ireland and Britain.[33] The first *Life of Pope Gregory* to be composed was produced not at Rome, but at Whitby, in the early 8th century, drawing on traditions transmitted by Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus, and certainly emanating from Rome.[34]

Gregory's name only started to be invoked in Rome as an authority for liturgical practice some decades after his death. Our earliest witness to this may be an addition made to a copy of the *Liber pontificalis* about Pope Honorius (625–38), observing that he had "confirmed a decree of Gregory on the Antiphonal and order of offices and psalms" so as to ensure some uniformity between monastic liturgy in Rome (presumably at St. Peter's) with that of churches elsewhere in the city, reducing the liturgy at Easter and Pentecost to three readings and psalms, as in the Roman Church, "because of the displeasure of the people".[35] A 12th-century description of St. Peter refers to this decree, outlining his liturgical instructions for the city of Rome.[36] Bede (*c.*672–735) never mentions that Gregory composed an antiphonary, and reports his instructions to Augustine that he should adopt whatever liturgical customs were appropriate, not just the Roman customs in which he had been raised.[37] Yet even though Bede does not

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[32] On subsequent reform of this feast, see Paul Hayward, "Gregory the Great as 'Apostle of the English' in Post-Conquest Canterbury," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 55 (2004), 19–57.

[33] Vitalian, quoted by Bede, *HE* 3.29 (eds Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors [Oxford, 1969], p. 320).

[34] *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an anonymous monk of Whitby* (ed. Bertram Colgrave [Cambridge, 1985]). Alan Thacker, "Memorializing Gregory the Great: the Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Early Eighth centuries," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), 59–84.

[35] *LP*, trans. Davis, p. 67 (ed. Mommsen, p. 173): "et constitutionem sancti Gregorii in antiphonario et ordine officiorum et psalmorum corroborauit et ut a monachis alleluia dimitteretur in LXXa et in pasca et in pentecostem sicut Romana ecclesia fecit tres lecciones et tres psalmi propter populi displicenciam recitarentur et totas illas duas ebdomadas romano more in officio agerent."; Mews, "Gregory the Great, the Rule of Benedict and Roman Liturgy," 135.

[36] *Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae* 20 (eds Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico* 3:404).

[37] Bede, *HE* 1.27 (eds Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 80–82).

explicitly acknowledge Wilfrid's claim that he was responsible for introducing Roman antiphonal chant practice, he does report that Roman chant was introduced by disciples of Gregory, suggesting a connection in his mind.[38] That Gregory was interested in liturgical reform is shown by a letter, not preserved at the Lateran, but certainly authentic, in which he criticized ostentatious soloist deacons as unspiritual, and sought to have chant performed by a choir of clerics no higher than the rank of subdeacon, as if he wished to implement a monastic style of choir.[39] John the Deacon later claimed that Gregory had established *scholae cantorum* (certainly in existence by the late 7th century) at both St. Peter's and the Lateran, as well as having revised the liturgy of Pope Gelasius.[40] An account of the liturgy of the monasteries attached to the basilica of St. Peter (*Ordo Romanus XIX*), likely to be from the late 7th century, mentions Gregory as one of a number of popes who contributed chant to the cycle of the liturgical year.[41] This *Ordo* also refers to monks attached to St. Peter's as observing the *Rule* of Benedict, which prescribed the Roman practice of singing through the psalter, punctuated with appropriate antiphons, once a week. In 735, Egbert of York mentions that he studied "the antiphonary of Gregory" in Rome, when he travelled there to receive the *pallium*, pronouncing it to be the same as that which had been introduced into England by Augustine of Canterbury.[42] Gregory's authority was synonymous with correct observance of the Roman liturgy, at least for pilgrims coming to St. Peter's.

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[38] He refers to several singers who taught chant after the manner of Rome, including a certain James at York; Eddi, Wilfrid's biographer, and Maban of Hexham, taught "by the successors of the disciples of St. Gregory in Kent," *HE* 2.20, 4.2, 5.20 (eds Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 206, 324, 530). But see Eddi, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, ch. 47 (ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave [Cambridge, 1927], p. 98).

[39] Gregory, *Epp.* 5.53a and 5.57a (eds Paul Ewald and Ludwig M. Hartmann, 2 vols, MGH Epp. 1–2 [Hannover, 1891–99], 1:353 and 363). They do not occur in Norberg's edition of Gregory's letters, based on the *registrum Lateranense*, suggesting that its clerics may have not wanted to remember these reforms, likely preserved at St. Peter's (as implied by the vision of Taio). Norberg (CCSL 140:vi–vii) comments that there are authentic letters of Gregory outside the *Register*, referring to idem, *In Registrum Gregorii Magni studia critica* 1–2 (Uppsala, 1937–39). See also Lucia Castaldi, "L'archivum Lateranense e la trasmissione delle opera di Gregorio Magno," in *Gregorio Magno e l'invenzione del medioevo*, ed. Luigi Giovanni Ricci (Florence, 2006), pp. 67–71.

[40] John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* (PL 75:84A, 90CD).

[41] On difficulties with the late 8th century date assigned to *Ordo Romanus XIX* by Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Age*, 4 vols (Louvain, 1931–61), 1:330–33, and 3:222–27, and the allusions to the *Rule* of Benedict in the *Ordines XIV–XIX*, likely to be a single text, see Mews, "Gregory the Great, the Rule of Benedict and Roman Liturgy," 138–40.

[42] Egbert, *De institutione catholica dialogus* 15 (PL 89:441BC).

The Image of Gregory 780–1100

Gregory's reputation only became widely established on the continent as an authority on monastic and liturgical observance during the time of Charlemagne (742–814). Monks were required to follow the *Rule* of Benedict, making them more clericalized than in previous generations. Only after 780—just when Egbert's disciple, Alcuin, left York to join the court of Charlemagne—does a preface (*Gregorius praesul*) written in the style of Aldhelm give wide publicity in his realm to the notion that Gregory had composed the entire chant for the Mass and the cycle of the liturgical year. Charlemagne's monastic advisors needed to invoke Gregory's authority in plainchant, as they discovered that Gallican liturgical traditions and plainchant differed significantly from those observed in Rome. Monastic chroniclers frequently told the story of the crisis engendered by this encounter and Charlemagne's reply that all should go back to the pure "Gregorian" source. The chant subsequently known as "Gregorian" was the fruit of a complex interaction between Frankish musical theorists, intent on transforming Roman chant according to their understanding of the modes. The so-called "old Roman" style of chant was still observed at the Lateran and some other Roman churches in the 11th century, when it was occasionally recorded in manuscripts and attributed to Pope Vitalian—as if the Lateran clergy refused to adapt to liturgical attributions widely attributed to Gregory the Great in the time of Charlemagne.[43]

The first *Life of Gregory* to be written on the continent was that by Paul the Deacon (*c.*720–*c.*799), who *c.*787 became a monk of Monte Cassino, re-established by Pope Gregory II in 717. Paul emphasizes that Gregory was a vessel of the Holy Spirit, directly inspired in his writing about Ezekiel, another great prophet, in an account that would be expanded in the 10th century with details from the Whitby *Life*.[44] Only when John Hymmonides, also a Roman deacon, prepared a new *Life* *c.*873–76, that drew on archives preserved in Rome, do we get a fuller portrait of Gregory as a great pope, able to establish his imprint on the Latin West. He did so just as John's friend, Anastasius the Librarian, was translating records left by another 7th-century pope, Martin I. They were both seeking renewal of the

[43] Testimonies gathered by Bruno Stäblein, *Die Gesänge des altrömischen Graduale* (Kassel, 1970), pp. 140*–150*.

[44] Paul the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii Magni* (ed. H. Grisar, "Die Gregorbiographie des Paulus Diakonus in ihrer ursprünglichen Gestalt, nach italienischen Handschriften," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 11 [1887], 158–73; and ed. Sabina Tuzzo, *Vita sancti Gregorii Magni* [Pisa, 2002]). PL 75:42–60 provides an interpolated version, from the 10th century.

papacy at a particularly difficult time.[45] Most surviving copies of John the Deacon's *Life of Gregory* were produced in the 11th and 12th centuries, with numbers dropping quite significantly in the 13th and 14th centuries.[46]

John's account is remarkable not just for the detail it gives about Gregory, based on documents now lost to us, but for its eye-witness account of portraits that he saw in the interior of St. Andrew's, the family villa of Gregory on the Caelian Hill that he converted into a monastery. He reports that in its atrium were two images, one of Gregory's father, Gordian, standing next to a seated St. Peter and wearing a chestnut-coloured chasuble over a dalmatic, and with a long face, a modest beard, and a serious expression. The other was of his mother, Silvia, wearing a veil across her shoulders, with a round and shining face, demonstrating her beauty even in old age, and carrying a *psalterium* in her left hand, with the inscription: "Gregory made this for Silvia, [his] mother."[47] John then provides an even more detailed description of another portrait, important because it enabled his readers to imagine exactly how Gregory wanted to be remembered by his monks, through an image certainly more late antique than medieval:

> But in an apse behind the brothers' *cellarium*, Gregory is shown, depicted on a circle of stucco, just and well formed in stature; his face is tempered evenly from the length of his father's countenance and the roundness of his mother's, so that it seems to be shaped with a certain fitting roundness; his beard, like his father's, is somewhat tawny and sparse. His head is large and bald, surrounded with dark hair hanging down below the middle of the ear; two little curls bending towards the right crown a forehead broad and high. The eyes are of yellow-brown colour, not large, but open; the eyebrows arched, long, and thin; the under-eyelids full. The nose is aquiline, with open nostrils. The lips are red and thick, the cheeks shapely, the chin prominent and well-formed; in complexion eagle-like and high-coloured, but not yet flushed as happened to him in later life. The expression is gentle, his hands beautiful, with tapering fingers well adapted to writing. He is standing, clad in a chestnut-coloured chasuble over a dalmatic. His left hand grasps a book of the gospels, his right the form of a cross. A modest *pallium* is led from around from the right shoulder to under his chest above the stomach, then

[45] On the literary achievement of Anastasius, see Bronwen Neil, *Seventh-century Popes and Martyrs. The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, Studia Antiqua Australiensia 2 (Turnhout, 2006).

[46] See the list of 156 MSS cited by Lucia Castaldi in her prologue to *Iohannes Hymmonides Diaconus Romanus, Vita Gregorii I Papae. La tradizione manoscritta* (Florence, 2004), pp. xlix–lii.

[47] *Vita Gregorii* 2.83 (PL 75:229B–230A): "Gregorius Silviae matri fecit."

> is placed on the back across the left shoulder; its other part, coming over the same shoulder, properly straight, hangs not across the middle of the body, but the side. Around the head is not a halo, but the likeness of a picture, the sign of a living person. From this it is clearly shown that Gregory wished his picture to be carefully executed in his lifetime, through which he could more regularly be gazed upon by his monks, not as prideful glory, but as a caution of known punishment. He composed for it this distich:
>
> Christ, powerful lord, who endows our honour
> Govern the permitted office with customary piety.[48]

The image John describes did not include a dove. His explanation of Gregory being shown with "the likeness of a picture which is a sign that he is living, not a halo" (*circa verticem vero tabulae similitudinem, quod viventis insigne est... non coronam*) helps elucidate the significance of the square nimbus in a papal portrait of Leo IV (847–55) at San Clemente, produced in Leo's own lifetime, presumably modelled on that of Gregory.[49] A very similar image of a bishop, carrying a book and a cross, but with a halo, is painted within the opening initial of the second book of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, produced at Jarrow after the text's completion in

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[48] *Vita Gregorii* 2.84 (PL 75:230B–231A): "Sed et in absidula post fratrum cellarium Gregorius ejusdem artificis magisterio in rota gypsea pictus ostenditur, statura justa et bene formata, facie de paternae faciei longitudine et maternae rotunditate ita medie temperata, ut cum rotunditate quadam decentissime videatur esse deducta, barba paterno more subfulva et modica; ita calvaster, ut in medio frontis gemellos cincinnos rarusculos habeat, et dextrorsum reflexos; corona rotunda et spatiosa, capillo subnigro et decenter intorto sub auriculae medium propendente; fronte speciosa, elatis et longis, sed exilibus superciliis; oculis pupilla furvis non quidem magnis sed patulis; subocularibus plenis; naso a radice vergentium superciliorum subtiliter directo, circa medium latiore, deinde paululum recurvo et in extremo patulis naribus prominente; ore rubeo; crassis et subdividuis labiis, genis compositis; mento a confinio maxillarum decibiliter prominente; colore aquilino et vivido, nondum, sicut ei postea contigit, cardiaco; vultu mitis; manibus pulchris; teretibus digitis et habilibus ad scribendum. Praeterea planeta super dalmaticam castanea, Evangelium in sinistra, modus crucis in dextra; pallio mediocri a dextro videlicet humero sub pectore super stomachum circulatim deducto, deinde sursum per sinistrum humerum post tergum deposito, cujus pars altera super eumdem humerum veniens propria rectitudine, non per medium corporis, sed ex latere pendet; circa verticem vero tabulae similitudinem, quod viventis insigne est, praeferens, non coronam. Ex quo manifestissime declaratur, quia Gregorius dum adviveret, suam similitudinem depingi salubriter voluit, in qua posset a suis monachis, non pro elationis gloria, sed pro cognitae districtionis cautela, frequentius intueri. Ubi hujusmodi distichon ipse dictavit: 'Christe potens Domine, nostri largitor honoris, Indultum officium solita pietate guberna'." This translation is adapted and corrected from that given by Frederick Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great, His Place in History and Thought* (1905; New York, 1967), p. 242.

[49] John Osborne, "The portrait of Pope Leo IV in San Clemente, Rome: a Re-examination of the So-called Square Nimbus in Medieval Art," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 47 (1979), 58–65.

731, but before 741, perhaps while Bede was still alive.[50] Although a later copyist has added *Augustinus* around the halo (thinking it represented Augustine of Canterbury), the fact that it introduces Bede's account of Gregory supports Meyvaert's argument that it provides our earliest surviving image of the pope, modeled on an image later described by John the Deacon.[51] The practice of showing Gregory in liturgical garments, while inspired by a dove, derives from combining this description with John's account (reported with less detail by Paul the Deacon) of Gregory writing under divine inspiration, as in the Hartker Antiphonal from St. Gall, in the early 10th century (Fig. 1), where he is shown composing chant recorded as neumes by a scribe. John the Deacon helped create an image of Gregory that few medieval readers could forget.

This image of Gregory as an inspired pope was strengthened further by Guido of Arezzo (991–1050), who sought to communicate with new facility the chant he believed had been composed by Gregory the Great. In his prologue to the *Antiphonarium* of Gregory, Guido lamented that there were so many antiphonaries circulating in individual churches (not of Gregory, but of Leo, Albert, and many others) that he set out to explain how notating chant by pitch could communicate Gregory's liturgical vision.[52] While traditionally these melodies had been passed on by memory, Guido's revolution enabled them to acquire a degree of uniformity never previously achieved. Only by the time of William of Hirsau (1030–91) would the chant be specifically referred to as Gregorian.

Gregory, Mary Magdalene and the Power of the Visual Image

Perhaps the most useful of Gregory's writings for any medieval preacher were his *Homilies on the Gospels*, elucidating readings chosen (possibly by himself) for the cycle of the liturgical year, and delivered in the various basilicas of Rome.[53] Of great impact on medieval visual art, in particular from the 12th century onwards, was his innovative interpretation of

[50] Anglo-Saxon, "St Gregory the Great (wrongly identified as Augustinus)", from the St. Petersburg Bede, St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Lat. Q.v.I.18 fol. 26v (*c.*740).

[51] Paul Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory the Great*, Jarrow Lecture, 1964, Plate II and n. 17, pp. 21–22, reprinted in *Bede and his World: the Jarrow Lectures, 1958–1993*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 107–32, esp. pp. 127–28.

[52] *Prologus in Antiphonarium*, ed. Joseph Smits van Waesberghe, Divitiae musicae artis, A/III (Buren, 1975), p. 63.

[53] On the circumstances of the composition and dating of the sermons and homilies, see Raymond Étaix's introduction to *HEv.* (CCSL 141:v–ix).

Mary Magdalene, in Homily 25, delivered at the Lateran in the Octave of Easter, as not just the woman who wept as she stood outside the tomb (John 20:11), but as the penitent woman described by Luke (7:37–50) who shed tears over his feet, and whose sins were forgiven by Jesus because of her great love for him: "Mary Magdalene, who had been a sinner in the city, loving truth, washed away the stains of her fault and the voice of Truth was fulfilled, saying, 'Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much.'"[54] Gregory also expanded on the Lukan theme in Homily 33, preached in 591 in the Roman basilica of San Clemente. Here he explores the image of God's unceasing love for his Church, symbolically understood as the Church of the Gentiles, represented by the sinful woman.[55] Images of touching, kissing, anointing, and a love that burns but is not consumed, saturate Gregory's homily. Visual images rather than theology carry his meaning in a way that would inspire numerous medieval artists.[56] While various eastern fathers had sometimes confused different Marys, no previous exegete had connected the tears of the sinful woman in Luke to the tears shed by Mary Magdalene for Jesus as she stood over the tomb.[57] For exegetes like Jerome, virginity (above all that of the Virgin Mary) had been the definitive attribute of the bride of Christ. Gregory was extending ideas about perfume and love offered by Origen's commentary on the Song of Songs, and re-asserting an ancient tradition that linked the bride (as in a rubric to the *Vetus Latina* version of the Song of Songs) to Mary Magdalene as the archetypal bride of Christ.[58]

Gregory's devotion to Mary Magdalene did not win immediate recognition, except in England, where Bede records her feast on 22 July.[59] It did not become widely popularized until a sermon attributed to Odo of Cluny (d. *c.*942) brought together all the scriptural passages he could find

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[54] *HEv.* 25.1 (CCSL 141:205): "Maria Magdalena, quae fuerat in ciuitate peccatrix, amando ueritatem, lauat lacrimis maculas criminis, et uox Veritatis impletur qua dicitur: Dimissa ei sunt peccata multa, quia dilexit multum."

[55] On the dating of this sermon see Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalene. Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2000), p. 32.

[56] Cynthia Hahn makes a similar point about the efficacy of hagiographical narrative in effecting spiritual conversion. See her *Portrayed on the Heart. Narrative Effect in Pictorial Lives of Saints from the Tenth through the Thirteenth Century* (Berkeley, 2001), pp. 31–32.

[57] Origen, *Commentarium in Canticum canticorum* 2, trans. Rufinus (ed. Willem Adolf Baehrens, Corpus Berolinense 33 [Berlin, 1925], pp. 61–241 at p. 166).

[58] Donatien De Bruyne, "Les anciennes versions latines du Cantique des Cantiques," *Revue Bénédictine* 38 (1926), 97–122.

[59] Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, p. 35.

about her, inspired by Gregory's teaching.[60] Not only did Odo establish the abbey of Cluny, dedicated to St. Peter, as a model of monastic observance, but he was also invited to Rome to restore its monasteries to observance of the *Rule* of Benedict. Odo's sermon on Mary Magdalene was matched by a series of hymns that he composed in honour of the four saints he considered most important: St. Peter, Mary Magdalene, St. Benedict, and St. Martin.[61] While his respect for Benedict and Martin reflected a careful balance between Roman and Gallican forms of monasticism, his choice of both St. Peter and Mary Magdalene reflected the attention he gave to both figures. Odo helped reinforce Gregory's perspective of the Magdalene as both penitent and bride of Christ.

Gregory's thinking about Mary Magdalene gained further influence through the increasing popularity of her cult in the 11th and 12th centuries. There was a special altar dedicated to her in the choir of the Lateran, according to a description of that church from the early 13th century (which also mentions that her head was found to be missing, presumably stolen).[62] Her relics were more venerated, however, at the abbey of Vezelay, which claimed in the 11th century to have rescued them from an abandoned church in Marseilles.

Just as Gregory evoked the image of Mary Magdalene to communicate an image of desire for God, so he was aware that visual images had the capacity to communicate divine truth. Carolingian debates about images (which extended those taking place in the East) relied on Gregory's thinking about the positive spiritual role played by visual imagery. The originality of his thinking on image-making lies in his discussion of the relationship and cognitive parallels he discerns between visual images and text, both spoken and written.[63] The original sources for later doctrinal formulations are two letters written by Gregory to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, in

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[60] The authorship of this sermon (PL 173:713–21) is contested. See Dominique Iogna-Prat, "La Madeleine du *Sermo in veneratione sanctae Mariae Magdalenae* attribué à Odon de Cluny," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome* 104/1 (1992), 37–70, and Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, p. 38.

[61] PL 133:514C–15A.

[62] *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae* 10, in *Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae* (eds Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti, *Codice topografico della città di Roma*, vol. 3 [Rome, 1946], p. 346); on this work, see Eivor Andersen Oftestad, *The House of God. The Translation of the Temple and the Interpretation of the Lateran Cathedral in the Twelfth Century* (University of Oslo, Faculty of Theology, 2010).

[63] See Celia Chazelle's penetrating analysis of Gregory's letters to Serenus, "Pictures, books, and the illiterate: Pope Gregory I's letters to Serenus of Marseilles," *Word & Image* 6/2 (1990), 138–53, esp. 144–45. See also Cristina Ricci's article in this volume.

which he castigates Serenus for destroying paintings in several churches in Marseilles.[64] His reminder to Serenus of his duty to attend to the pastoral needs of his flock, above all in preaching, provides the context for Gregory's thought on the place of visual images in the life of the Church. In the second letter to Serenus, we read: "And then you must add that painted images had been made for the edification of ignorant people, so that, not knowing how to read, they might learn what was said by studying the actual story."[65] Gregory affirms that for the illiterate person the visual image points to that which it signifies.[66] These letters, together with another to the recluse Secundinus, attributed to Gregory, became especially vital in the iconoclastic debates in the Carolingian era in the West.[67] They generated ever more nuanced readings by the 12th century.[68] Honorius Augustodunensis formulated, from the inspiration of Gregory, a formula of the "threefold purpose" (*triplex ratio*) of images to instruct, to recall to memory, and to incite to devotion.[69] Under the authority of Gregory's name, Greek image theory and an affirmation of the affective role of visual images were absorbed into western thought and practice.[70] Scholars in the past have enlisted Gregory's thinking to justify a range of doctrinal and theological positions on the place of images in Christian devotions and worship. While Celia Chazelle has reminded us that some of the most oft-repeated claims attributed to Gregory, notably about his teaching that pictures were the bibles of the poor, cannot be found in

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[64] *Reg.* 9.209 (CCSL 140A:768).

[65] *Reg.* 11.10, trans. Martyn, 3:746 (CCSL: 140A:873): "ac deinde subiungendum: quia picturas imaginum, quae ad aedificationem imperiti populi factae fuerant, ut nescientes litteras ipsam historiam intendentes, quid dictum sit discerent, transisse in adorationem uideras, idcirco commotus es, ut eas imagines frangi praeciperes." See Chazelle, "Pictures, books," 139.

[66] Chazelle, ibid., 146.

[67] Gregory, *Reg.* 9.148, and an expanded version of this letter, containing discussion of icons, in Appendix 10 of *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, 3:889–95. On the disputed authorship of the letters see Chazelle, "Pictures, books," 138, n. 2. Willemien Otten comments on the central role of Gregory in the *Libri Carolini* in "The Texture of Tradition: the Role of the Church Fathers in Carolingian Theology," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: from the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus, 2 vols (Leiden, 1997), 1:3–51, at p. 23.

[68] See Herbert L. Kessler, "Gregory the Great and Image Theory in Northern Europe during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Malden MA, 2006), pp. 151–72.

[69] Kessler, "Gregory the Great and Image Theory," p. 152; Jeffrey Hamburger, "The place of theology in medieval art history: problems, positions, possibilities," in *The Mind's Eye. Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, eds Jeffrey Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton, 2006), pp. 1–31, esp. p. 15.

[70] Kessler, "Gregory the Great and Image Theory," pp. 152–53.

these two letters to Serenus, they were inspired by Gregory's sense of the importance of communicating Scripture to a wide audience.[71]

Gregory's teaching on the didactic and devotional place of sacred images was above all shaped by pastoral concerns. The continued transmission of his thinking concerning sacred pictures throughout the Middle Ages guaranteed that the Latin Church remained faithful (at least in theory) to Gregory's emphasis on preaching. Visual images, especially narrative cycles of biblical stories and scenes from saints' lives, kept before the faithful the deeds of the holy. By the late Middle Ages the audience for pictorial cycles extended beyond the uneducated and the laity.[72] Through all the artistic means at the painter's disposal—colour, line, and above all gestures and facial expression—the figures depicted reminded the viewer of the spiritual truth in the story before them. Gregory observed this process in his commentary on the Song of Songs: "For just as a picture exists through colours and things, so Holy Scripture exists through words and senses; for he is foolish who ignores what inheres in the colours of a picture, like the things that are painted."[73] Such narrative cycles made the essentials of Christian faith comprehensible to the broadest possible audience. Visual exegesis depended upon artists rendering meaning in human experience.

The biblical narratives lie at the heart of the Christian life. Gregory's *Regula pastoralis* made clear the preacher's duty to educate and lead the congregation to meditation on and identification of the holy lessons of the biblical story. He was aware that painted images have the power to shape what is in the mind.[74] In the same way, pictures help the illiterate to internalize stories through a process that Gregory calls compunction.[75] Gregory's work constantly uses the idea of *exempla* as a spur to inner transformation. His homilies show him exploiting the centrality of pictorial imagery in his theology and spirituality.[76] While medieval

[71] Chazelle, "Pictures, books," 138.

[72] Kessler, "Gregory the Great and Image Theory," pp. 156–59.

[73] *Cant.* (ed. Patrick Verbraken, CCSL 144 [Turnhout, 1963], p. 5): "Sic est enim scriptura sacra in uerbis et sensibus, sicut pictura in coloribus et rebus: et nimis stultus est, qui sic picturae coloribus inheret, ut res, quae pictae sunt, ignoret."

[74] Chazelle, "Pictures, books," 149. See *RP* 2.10 (SC 381:242) on the mind being attracted by painted images, repeating a statement in *Mor.* 26.6 (CCSL 143B:1272).

[75] On compunction in Gregory's writing, as evoked by art, see Hahn, *Portrayed on the Heart*, pp. 48–49 with further bibliography.

[76] Hamburger comments: "Gregory likewise framed his moral theology in pictorial terms predicated on a theory of perception." See Hamburger, "The Place of Theology," p. 15.

theologians might draw more heavily on Augustine for discussion of doctrinal concepts, Gregory's writings were particularly relevant to those creating visual images to communicate scriptural themes.

Gregory in the Age of Monastic Reform and Early Scholasticism

Reforming popes, above all Gregory VII (1073–85), also turned more to Gregory I's letters for guidance on governing the Church. They encouraged canonists to scour through Gregory's writings to find legal precedents that could build a firm and cohesive body of canon law.[77] The letters of Gregory VII betray a concern with pastoral detail across Latin Christendom that show how much he hoped to emulate his great predecessor, even though the political situation had become radically different. Gregory VII perceived the papacy as a supranational power, independent from the multitude of new Christian kingdoms developing across Europe, from Spain in the West to Poland in the East. The precedent set by Gregory the Great in rebuking clergy and bishops who did not live up to the highest ascetic standards enabled Gregory VII to develop the authority of the papacy in a way that had never been possible in the late 6th century. While Gregory VII would encounter particular resistance from Emperor Henry IV in imposing this vision, subsequent popes in the 12th and 13th centuries would not tire of looking back to the example of Gregory the Great, as moral guide and authority for rebuking those clergy who failed to live up to the standards expected of them.

Gregory's writings were particularly popular in monastic communities committed to spiritual reform, notably in the Cistercian Order. William of Champeaux (d. 1121), the Parisian scholastic who established the Abbey of St. Victor in 1111, but spent most of his last years at Clairvaux, produced an epitome of the *Moralia* (not yet edited), preserved at Clairvaux.[78] This may reflect a personal shift towards a more moral and mystical style of thought than evident in his earlier scholastic teaching. Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs, along with that of Origen, seems to have had a particular impact on William of St. Thierry (1070–1148) and Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), who both sought to combine Augustine's theology of grace with the emphasis on penitence found in both Cassian and Gregory. In

[77] René Wasselynck. "Présence de s. Grégoire le grand dans les recueils canoniques (X–XII)," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 22 (1965), 205–19.

[78] Wasselynck, "Les compilations des Moralia in Job," 20–21.

England, William of Malmesbury (1095–1143), a Benedictine monk and a great historian, produced an anthology culled from various writings of Gregory's, divided into four parts, but focusing attention on their moral instruction. A comment that he makes in introducing his *Deflorationes ex libris beati Gregorii* reveals why he found Gregory a continuing source of inspiration:

> You can notice that I have culled nothing about the solution of the most profound questions, but rather those things which relate to improvement of life, edification of the soul, and hope for forgiveness.... If anyone objects that questions are raised in the chapters about resurrection, the torments of hell, and seeing God, let him more appropriately and fittingly turn these things to morality, in which he will see in a mirror what he ought to hope for, what to fear.[79]

William's remarks suggest that Gregory's eschatological reflections were not acceptable to everyone in the 12th century. By identifying Gregory as a rich source of moral instruction, William was singling out the most enduring aspect of his contribution.

Gregory's allegorical interpretations were beginning to seem old-fashioned to exegetes like Rupert of Deutz, who found new energy in recovering the historical sense of the sacred text, as its initial (although not only) meaning.[80] Yet Gregory's core insight that, beyond the historical and allegorical levels of Scripture there lay a tropological or moral level, continued to exert influence. Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), not attracted by Jerome's scholarly approach to biblical learning, identified with Gregory the Great as someone who had been directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. While Hildegard was more interested than Gregory in the workings of the human body, she shared his profoundly moralistic vision of the meaning of Scripture. A key concept in her thinking was that of *viriditas*, the green life-force of divine origin that underpinned creation—a term that occurs no fewer than 56 times in his *Moralia* on Job, but only once in

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[79] Hugh Farmer (ed.), "William of Malmesbury's Commentary on Lamentations," *Studia Monastica* 4 (1962), 283–311, esp. 302: "Illud porro animaduertere potestis me nichil hic de solutione profundarum questionum deflorasse, sed ea tantum posuisse que sint ad emendationem uite, ad edificationem anime, ad spem uenie.... Quod si quis forte obiecerit in capitulis de Resurrectione et tormentis gehenne et uidendo Deo questiones uentilare, commodius et consultius faciet si ad moralitatem ea retorqueat, in quibus quasi e speculo intuebitur quid maxime debeat sperare, quid timere." The *Deflorationes* (studied by Farmer in an appendix), occurs only in Cambridge University Library, ii.III.20 (unedited except for the preface). I am grateful to Sigbjørn Sønnesyn for drawing this work to my attention.

[80] Wasselynck observes a shift in Rupert from initial enthusiasm to a more cautious position after 1117, "L'influence de l'exégèse de S. Grégoire le grand," 177–81.

Augustine's *City of God.*[81] Hildegard responded to Gregory's awareness of imagery drawn from nature, as well as his preference for visual over abstract images.

Gregory's exegetical programme would be developed most fully in the 12th century by Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), who gave perhaps greater emphasis to its historical foundation, but maintained awareness of its profoundly mystical character. Whereas Gregory never commented on secular authors, and had famously asserted that he would not constrain divine scripture to the rules of Donatus, Hugh defined a programme of study in his *Didascalicon* that combined secular and sacred learning.[82] Hugh sought to explain to his students the value of all those classical authors whom Gregory the Great had taken for granted, without diminishing the central importance of those biblical books that he saw as vehicles for grasping divine wisdom. He provided a new structure through which the insights of Gregory the Great could be integrated with those of the other fathers of the Church. Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) would continue this approach, while arguing that the obscurity of some of Gregory's interpretations should not prevent exegetes from going further in their analysis.[83]

Even Peter Abelard (1079–1142), often thought of as more disputatious than contemplative in spirit, was fascinated by Gregory the Great. He singles out the smoothness of his prose, observing that it rivalled that of pagan authors, just as much as Jerome and Augustine matched the ancients in depth and subtlety.[84] In advocating reason, Abelard might seem to question Gregory's much cited comment in his Easter homily that "faith had no merit if it could be proved by reason"—a quotation that opened every version of the *Sic et Non* to debate the relationship between faith and reason.[85] In his *Theologia "Scholarium"*, Abelard argued against those who used this quotation to provide "solace for their ignorance". He insisted that Gregory was saying that faith could only reside in what was unseen,

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[81] See Constant Mews, "Religious Thinker: 'A Frail Human Being'," in *Voice of the Living Light. Hildegard of Bingen and her World*, ed. Barbara Newman (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 52–69, esp. p. 58.

[82] For a still excellent study, see the introduction to Jerome Taylor (ed. and trans.), *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor. A Medieval Guide to the Arts* (New York, 1991).

[83] See Wasselynck on both Hugh and Richard, "L'influence de l'exégèse de S. Grégoire le grand," 192–97.

[84] Peter Abelard, *Theologia christiana* 2.127 (ed. Eligius-Marie Buytaert, CCCM 12 [Turnhout, 1969], p. 191).

[85] *HEv.* 2.26 (CCSL 141:218); see Abelard, *Sic et Non* 1.1 (eds Blanche Boyer and Richard McKeon [Chicago, 1976–77], p. 113).

and that the doctrine of the Trinity, known by faith, formulated a set of truths beyond the human eye and only crudely expressed in words.[86]

In his *Theologia christiana* Abelard repeated John the Deacon's account of Gregory being so moved by a story about the generosity of the Emperor Trajan towards a widow that he wept tears in St. Peter's until he had heard that the emperor had been freed from eternal punishment, even if he had not entered paradise. Abelard related this story about a virtuous pagan to another tale, told by Ambrose, about the Emperor Valentinian who had died before gaining the baptism he desired.[87] While Gregory the Great never wrote about Trajan, the story told by John the Deacon and repeated by many writers after Abelard, articulated a sense that Gregory had sympathy for the virtuous pagan, even if he had to remain in limbo rather than enter paradise.[88]

Gregory the Great and Mendicant Culture 1200–1500

The increasing awareness of the writings of Aristotle in the Latin West during the 12th and 13th centuries inevitably shifted the direction of theology in a scholastic environment away from the contemplative and experiential focus, dominant in a monastic milieu. Yet even if Gregory's writing lacked the abstractions that fascinated scholastic theologians, its imagistic character appealed to preachers in the new mendicant orders, in particular, the Dominicans and Franciscans. It also had a particular impact on visual artists, keen to promote the message of Scripture through the telling image.[89] Taddeo Gaddi's fresco of *The Supper in the House of Simon the Pharisee*, which forms part of the decoration of the end wall of the refectory of the Franciscan convent of Santa Croce, Florence, executed *c.*1330–40, illustrates how Gregorian exegesis could be put to visual effect

[86] *Theologia "Scholarium"*, 1.12, 2.44–49 (eds Eligius-Marie Buytaert and Constant J. Mews, CCCM 13 [Turnhout, 1987], pp. 322–24, 428–33).

[87] *Theologia christiana* 2.112–14 (CCCM 12:182–84), quoting *Vita Gregorii* 44 (PL 75:105AB) and the *De obitu Valentiniani* of Ambrose; passages quoted in *Sic et Non* 106.22–27 (eds Boyer and McKeon, pp. 347–49).

[88] See John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 5.8 (ed. Clemens C.J. Webb [Oxford, 1909], p. 317); Thomas Aquinas (on the authority of John Damascene, rather than John the Deacon), *In IV Libros Sententiarum* 45.2.2.1.5. On this theme, see Marcia Colish, "The Virtuous Pagan: Dante and the Christian Tradition," in *The Unbounded Community: Papers in Christian Ecumenism in Honor of Jaroslav Pelikan*, eds William Caferro and Duncan G. Fisher (New York, 1996), pp. 43–91, repr. in Marcia Colish, *The Fathers and Beyond. Church Fathers between Ancient and Medieval Thought* (Aldershot, HA, 2008), XVII, esp. pp. 20–22.

[89] Hamburger, "The Place of Theology," pp. 14–16.

(Fig. 2). Three other scenes—*The Stigmatization of St. Francis, St. Louis of Toulouse Serving a Meal to the Poor,* and *St. Benedict Rescued from Starvation in the Desert*—appear on either side of the central image, *The Tree of Life. The Last Supper* is depicted underneath.[90] The artist visualizes a moment from the narrative of Luke 7:36–50 when the unnamed woman anoints Jesus's feet while he is seated at table with Simon and a disciple. By the 12th century, the central iconographic features of this subject were well-established, so that visual cues such as Christ's triple-nimbed halo and the woman stretched prostrate at Christ's feet enabled a wide spectrum of viewers to recognize the source of the narrative in Luke's Gospel. Such an image performs three functions: it stands alone by recalling a biblical story (thus fulfilling Gregory's requirement that pictorial imagery function mnemonically); it conflates separate moments of the narrative into one (as Gregory himself does when he combines the actions of weeping and kissing as expressions of God's love); the image, like preaching, points towards the mystery of God through our identification with the figures.

Gregory's instructions to Serenus had particular resonance for a 14th century artist: "... that from the sight of a past deed they should feel the burning of compunction and prostrate themselves humbly in adoration solely of the omnipotent, holy Trinity."[91] What lessons might the friars viewing Gaddi's images have meditated on as they gazed upon the frescos in their refectory? As for their founder, St. Francis of Assisi, preaching lay at the heart of their religious vocation. Gregory's pastoral theology fused with this commitment to preaching, advocated by all the mendicant orders, in fresh ways in the later Middle Ages. The viewer becomes both witness and participant in the didactic power of the sacred narrative.

The Mass of St. Gregory and Late Medieval Piety

By the 14th and 15th centuries, the current of evangelical dynamism that had given birth to the movements inspired by St. Francis and St. Dominic

[90] On Gaddi's fresco see Rab Hatfield, "The Tree of Life and the Holy Cross," in *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento,* eds Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse, NY, 1990), pp. 132–60.

[91] *Reg.* 11.10, trans. Martyn, 3:746 (CCSL 140A:746): "Sed hoc sollicite fraternitas tua admoneat ut ex uisione rei gestae ardorem compunctionis percipiant et in adoratione solius omnipotentis sanctae trinitatis humiliter prosternantur." Chazelle, "Pictures, books," 140.

were in urgent need of renewal. Increasingly, heretical groups were questioning the authority of ordained clergy to interpret the word of God, and above all the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. The establishment of the feast of Corpus Christi by Pope Urban IV, in response to a request from Juliana of Cornillon in 1266, represented a new move to create a focus of community devotion around the Eucharist, as a living sign of Christ's presence in the Church. Only in the 14th century, however, did the feast become widely celebrated and miracles reported that served to accentuate the reality of divine presence in the Eucharist.

In this climate of heightened eucharistic piety, Gregory the Great became perceived as the archetypal priest who lived out the sacrifice of Christ through the celebration of the mass. A core theme of the *Dialogues* was that celebration of the Mass could liberate a soul from punishment, and create harmony between the visible and invisible worlds.[92] This aspect of his spirituality acquired particular importance in the late 14th and 15th centuries in visual representations of Pope Gregory celebrating Mass and experiencing a vision of the sorrowing Christ (Fig. 3). As Bynum has argued, the "Mass of St. Gregory" was not intended to depict the doctrine of transubstantiation. Rather, its focus was penitential and soteriological.[93] It expands on a core theme of Gregory's *Dialogues*: that, through the sacrifice of the Mass, the penitent priest can glimpse an unseen reality, namely the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The artist is thus able to evoke the human suffering of Christ behind the liturgical action of Gregory as a priest. While the doctrine of purgatory had become much more developed than it had been at the time of Gregory the Great, its core theme, that penitent souls had to purge themselves before being worthy of the divine presence, was one that Gregory had helped establish. Only when reformers like Luther urged a return to the Augustinian emphasis on God's saving grace would Gregory's teaching about the power of the prayers of the saints fall into disfavour.

While Gregory the Great generated some stories (such as that told by John the Deacon about his admiration for the Emperor Trajan), another tradition started to circulate in the 12th century, equally unfounded, that

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[92] *Dial.* 4.47–60 (SC 265:188–202); see Straw, *Gregory the Great. Perfection in Imperfection*, pp. 103–06.

[93] Caroline Walker Bynum, "Seeing and Seeing Beyond: The Mass of St. Gregory in the Fifteenth Century," in *The Mind's Eye. Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, eds Jeffrey Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton, 2006), pp. 204–40, esp. p. 216.

he was responsible for destroying a whole library of pagan texts.[94] John of Salisbury reports a story in his *Policraticus* that Gregory's love for Scripture was so great that he had delivered up the pagan library of the Palatine to the flames.[95] The story, widely repeated by Renaissance humanists, may be connected to another, equally apocryphal, told in the 12th or 13th century by Master Gregory in *The Marvels of Rome* about a vast bronze image, thought to be of the sun god. Gregory tried unsuccessfully to destroy it, after the destruction of other statues in Rome, but then placed the surviving head and right hand in front of his palace, where it could still be admired.[96] This admirer of Classical Antiquity also claimed, when introducing his account of a naked Venus, "more like a living creature than a statue," that Pope Gregory had destroyed almost all the marble statues in Rome.[97] In the mind of lovers of antiquity, Pope Gregory had effectively become a symbol of ecclesiastical authority, critical of pagan culture.

Such attitudes, whether hostile or enthusiastic, were not based on profound knowledge of Gregory's writing. Nonetheless, they reveal the way Gregory's name had become synonymous by the later Middle Ages with values of religious faith and piety far removed from those of classical antiquity. When sermons were no longer written in Latin, Gregory no longer exercised the same influence as a preacher. In some ways, the temper of the 16th century was more suited to rediscovering the philological expertise of Jerome and the theological introspection of Augustine. Yet Gregory's writings, printed first in the late 15th century and then many times subsequently, continued to attract attention.[98] Gregory might no longer have been the object of a devotional cult, but he would never be forgotten.

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[94] Tilmann Buddensieg, "Gregory the Great, the Destroyer of Pagan Idols. The History of a Medieval Legend Concerning the Decline of Ancient Art and Literature," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965), 44–65. See further Ann Kuzdale's chapter *infra*.

[95] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 2.26 (ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, CCCM 118 [Turnhout, 1993], p. 146).

[96] *Magistri Gregorii De mirabilibus Urbis Romae* 6, eds Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, 3:150; Master Gregory, *The Marvels of Rome*, trans. John Osborne (Toronto, 1987), pp. 22–23, 48–51.

[97] *De mirabilibus* 12, in *Codice topografico* (eds Valentini and Zucchetti, 3:153): "Nunc vero pauca subiciam de signis marmoreis, quae paene omnes a beato Gregorio aut deletae aut deturpatae sunt." Trans. Osborne, pp. 12, 59–60.

[98] The first collected edition of Gregory's *Opera* was that of Bertholdus Rembolt (Paris, 1518), although many individual works had been published since the *Pastoral Care* in Mainz, 1460. See Appendix at the end of Ann Kuzdale's chapter, *infra*.

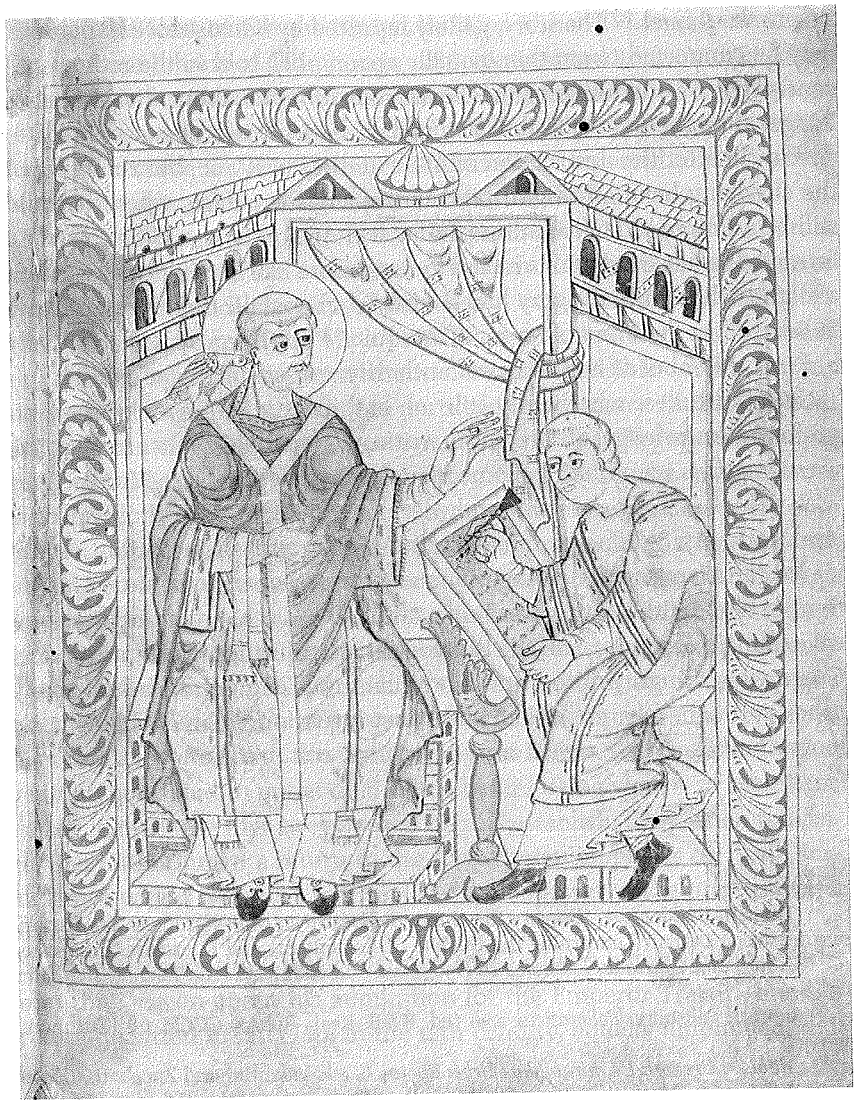

Fig. 1 St. Gallen, "Gregory the Great," from The Hartker Antiphonal, St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 390, p. 13, *c.*990–1000 [photo used with permission].

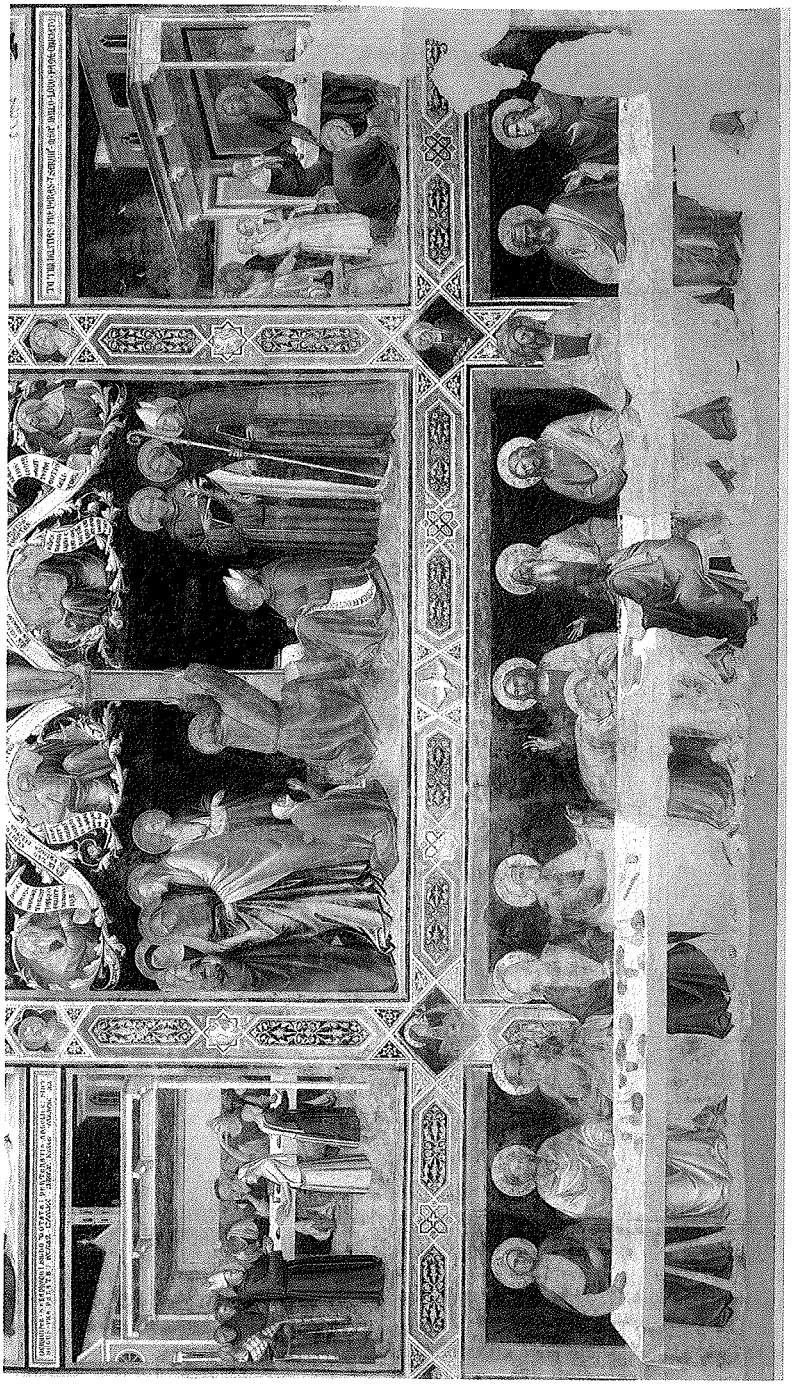

Fig. 2 Taddeo Gaddi, "The Supper in the House of the Pharisee," detail from the Refectory, Santa Croce, Florence, c.1330–40 [photo used with permission].

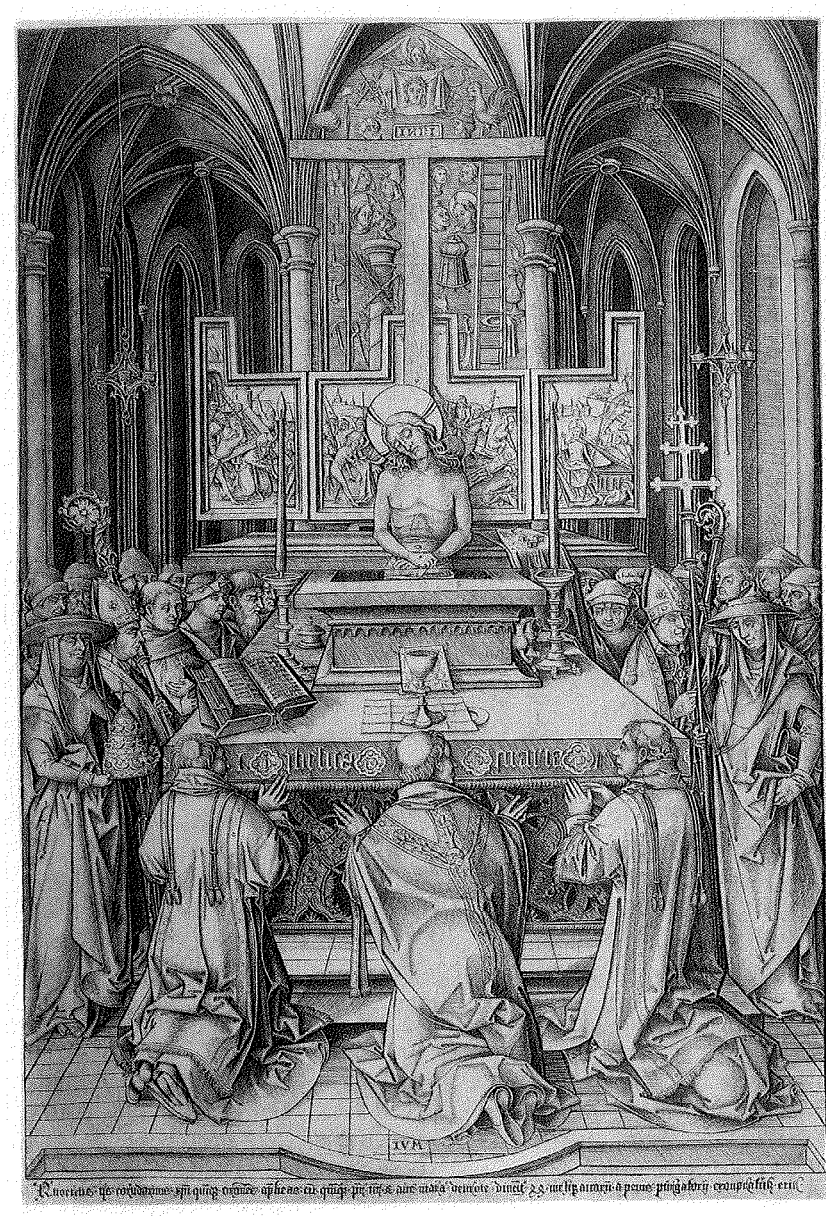

Fig. 3 Israhel van Meckenhem, "Mass of St. Gregory," engraving, 1480–90. London, British Museum [photo used with permission].

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GREGORY THE GREAT IN THE BYZANTINE TRADITION

Andrew Louth

Pope Gregory the Great seems in many ways to have been open to the Greek East.[1] He had, of course, spent several years in Constantinople as papal *apocrisiarius* (579–585/6), though it is difficult to be clear about the state of his Greek language skills.[2] Furthermore, although he is deeply indebted to Augustine, there seems another spirit in his thought and writings that has been associated with the world of eastern monasticism. Carole Straw, in her monograph on Gregory, early on remarks:[3]

> This spirit of asceticism from the desert is always a silent partner in his work, leading Gregory in new directions away from Augustine and the Western Fathers. He will often exhibit striking similarities with others of his era also steeped in eastern monasticism, such as Dorotheus of Gaza or John Climacus. This monastic sensibility, the restless vision of the athlete's battle with the devil, left a deep impression on Gregory.

Straw also notes another feature of Gregory's thought that aligns him with eastern thinkers and distances him from Augustine, namely, his concern for hierarchical order.[4] Given this affinity between Gregory and the East, it might be thought that Gregory would have been exceptionally welcome

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[1] See Lellia Cracco Ruggini, "Grégoire le grand et le monde byzantin," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al., pp. 83–94.

[2] Joan M. Petersen, "Did Gregory the Great know Greek?" in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Church History 13 (Oxford, 1976), pp. 121–34. Cracco Ruggini, "Grégorie le grand," takes Petersen's conclusion for granted, that Gregory's profession of ignorance of Greek was a humility *topos*. See further Joan M. Petersen, "Greek Influences upon Gregory the Great's Exegesis of Luke 15.1–10 in *Homelia in Euangelium* II, 34," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al., pp. 521–29. Petersen returned to this issue still later in: "'Homo omnino latinus?' The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great," *Speculum* 62 (1987), 529–51; cf. the Editors' Preface to this volume, on the extent of Gregory's knowledge of Greek.

[3] Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great. Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley—Los Angeles—London, 1988), p. 14. This influence/affinity has been explored in relation to the *Dialogues* in Joan M. Petersen, *The* Dialogues *of Gregory the Great in their Late Antique Cultural Background*, Studies and Texts 69 (Toronto, 1984).

[4] Straw, *Gregory*, p. 29 and n. 7. She mentions the eastern writers Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor and John Climacus.

in the Greek East. This is true, but tracing his influence in detail is no easy task.

This is partly because Gregory is exceptional in having any influence in the East at all. The Byzantine Greeks, probably from an inherited sense of cultural superiority, displayed very little interest in the Latins. It is only at the very end of the Byzantine era—from the close of the 13th century onwards—that there is any volume of translation from Latin into Greek. Then, initially under pressure from Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologus, translations were made from Latin to facilitate the coming together of minds necessary if the union between the Churches of East and West, fleetingly glimpsed at the Council of Lyon in 1274, were to become any kind of reality. Maximus (Manuel, before his tonsure) Planoudis made a translation of Augustine's *De trinitate* around 1280, following this with a translation of Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae* (*c.*1295)—as well as translations of Ovid. In the following century, several Latin theological works were made available in Greek translation (notably Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra gentiles* and parts of his *Summa theologiae*).[5] This, however, was a new phenomenon in Byzantium, triggered by the need for political support from the West, only available at the cost of theological union. Gregory is an exception to this neglect (and disdain) by the West. Already in his lifetime (*c.*602), Anastasius, Patriarch of Antioch, had translated *Regula pastoralis* into Greek; alas, it is lost, so one can say little about its influence.[6] One of Gregory's successors, Zacharias (741–52), the last of the "Greek popes", made a translation of his *Dialogues* into Greek, a work that became very popular in the Greek East, earning for its author the title *ho dialogos*, "the writer of the *Dialogues*".[7] Nevertheless, although the popularity of this work is an index of its widespread influence, this influence is hard to trace in detail, precisely because of the affinity with Byzantine ascetic literature that led to its being translated.

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[5] See, for example, Elizabeth Fisher, "Planoudes' *De Trinitate*, the Art of Translation and the Beholder's Share," in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, eds Aristotle Papanikolaou and George E. Demacopoulus (Crestwood NY, 2008), pp. 41–61.

[6] *Reg.* 12.6 (CCSL 140A:976). On this translation and that in the note below, see further Rita Lizzi, "La traduzione greca delle opere di Gregorio Magno dalla *Regula Pastoralis* ai *Dialogi*," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo* (Rome, 1991), 2:41–57.

[7] Zacharias' Greek Version of the *Dialogues* is printed in parallel with the Latin text in PL 77:147–432. A critical addition of the second dialogue can be found in Gianpaolo Rigotti, ed., *Vita di s. Benedetto nella versione greca di papa Zaccaria*, Hellenica: Testi e strumenti di letteratura greca antica, medievale e umanistica 8 (Alessandria, 2001). See also Gianpaolo Rigotti, "Gregorio il dialogo nel mondo bizantino," in *L'eredità spirituale di Gregorio Magno tra Occidente e Oriente*, ed. Guido Innocenzo Gargano (Verona, 2005), pp. 271–92.

Gregory the Great and John Climacus?

There are, however, a couple of other possible signs of Gregory's influence in the East, which it will be useful to discuss first, even though nothing very conclusive will emerge. We have already seen Carole Straw mentioning John Climacus as one with whom Gregory exhibits "striking similarities". There is a letter from Gregory to a John, abbot of Sinai, who has sometimes been identified with Climacus.[8] It is generally regarded as unlikely,[9] but in any case the letter reveals nothing about the relationship between the two men. However, at the beginning of Step 22, "On vainglory," of the *Scala paradisi*, Climacus remarks:

> Some would hold that vainglory is to be distinguished from pride, and so they give it a special place and chapter. Hence their claim that there are eight thoughts of wickedness (*tous tês kakias logismous*). But against this is the view of Gregory the Theologian and other teachers that in fact the number is seven. I also hold this view.[10]

There is, as many have remarked, no evidence that Gregory Nazianzus, known as "the Theologian", held that there were seven principal thoughts (or indeed considered the issue at all).[11] Gregory the Great did,[12] however, and it has been suggested that it is the pope to whom Climacus is referring here, *theologos* in the text being a mistake for *dialogos*. Metropolitan Kallistos remarks that although Gregory believed there were seven principal vices, they are not the same seven as Climacus believed there were. Gregory regards pride as the "root of evil", the source of the other seven *principalia vitia* (in comparison with Evagrius' traditional list, inserting envy and dropping *akêdia*, or assimilating it to *tristitia*), whereas John assimilates pride and vainglory (though in practice his listing of the principal evil thoughts is not as simple as that).[13] But Climacus does not claim

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[8] *Ep.* 1.2, dated Sept. 600 (CCSL 140A:860).

[9] According to Pierre Minard, "ne peut guère être saint Jean Climaque": introduction to *Grégoire le grand, Registre des Lettres*, tome 1*, ed. Pierre Minard, SC 370:33.

[10] John Climacus, *Klimax* 22 (21).1 (PG 88:948–49): *Tines men idiairetôi taxei kai logôi tên kenodoxeian para tên hyperêfanian filousin horizein; hothen kai oktô tous tês kakias logismous prôteuontas kai epitropous legousin einai. Ho de theologos Grêgorios, kai heteroi epta palin toutous exedôkan; hois egôge malista syntithesthai peithomai.* Trans. (modified) from John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell, with an introduction by Kallistos Ware (London, 1982), p. 201.

[11] For example, Norman Russell (*Ladder*, p. 201, n. 81) and Kallistos Ware (*Ladder*, p. 64, n. 246).

[12] See Gregory the Great, *Mor.* 31.45.87 (CCSL 143B:1610).

[13] See Ware, *Ladder*, pp. 64–6.

that "Gregory" has the same list, just that he has seven, which is true of Pope Gregory. Could John Climacus have been referring to Gregory the Great here? If so, he would be an early witness (maybe even a very early witness)[14] to Gregory's influence in the East. Climacus himself, however, can hardly have written *ho de dialogos Grêgorios*, as is suggested by those who want to see the pope referred to here, for the title *ho dialogos* must be later than Pope Zacharias' translation (mid-8th century), which made the *Dialogi* the one work in the East by which Pope Gregory was known. Perhaps Climacus simply wrote *ho de Grêgorios*, and a later scribe provided the epithet, in which case it is much more likely that he added *theologos*, far and away the best-known Gregory in the Byzantine world. I think we can forget the conjecture that *theologos* is a "correction" of *dialogos*. Nevertheless, John Climacus may have been referring to the pope, though it seems unlikely.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

The other apparent index of Gregory the Great's influence in the East is the fact that the *Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts* is ascribed to "St Gregory *ho dialogos*, pope of Rome". However, the tradition of ascribing the Presanctified Liturgy to Gregory seems only to have become established in early modern times; indeed, it is only in *printed* editions of the liturgical texts that there can be said to be a tradition.[15] Ascription of the Presanctified Liturgy to Gregory in surviving manuscripts is rare and quite late: the earliest manuscripts are from the 15th century. It looks as if the tradition in printed texts is due to the chance that it was a manuscript with the rare ascription to Gregory that formed the basis of early printed editions. There is no ancient tradition of such ascription; manuscripts generally have no attribution, though a few ascribe the Presanctified Liturgy to Germanus, and even fewer to Epiphanius.[16] There remains the question as to why the

[14] On the vexed question of John Climacus' chronology, see John Chryssavgis, *John Climacus. From the Egyptian Desert to the Sinaite Mountain* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 42–44.

[15] And it is a tradition that has been allowed to vanish. Three modern Greek *hieratika* I have consulted omit any mention of Gregory the Great, even in the final blessing, which is written out in full, making clear the omission of any mention of Gregory *ho dialogos*, pope of Rome. The Russians seem more conservative: although there is no mention of Gregory in the title of the liturgy, he is included in the saints mentioned in the final blessing in the *sluzhebnik* issued in 1996.

[16] See the table in Stefanos Alexopoulos, *The Presanctified Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite*, Liturgia Condenda 21 (Leuven, 2009), p. 52.

Liturgy of the Presanctified ever came to be attributed to Pope Gregory. In a recent book on the *Liturgy of the Presanctified*, Stefanos Alexopoulos has suggested that the answer might lie in the disputes between the Greeks and the Latins over the liturgical nature of weekdays in Lent. Here we find one of the most striking differences between Greek and Latin liturgical custom: weekdays in Lent for the Greeks are aliturgical, that is, no full celebration of the liturgy with consecration of the elements is permitted; for the Latins, in contrast, provision is made for a full liturgy, including a special epistle and gospel, for each weekday during Lent. For the Latins, that is, daily celebration of the Eucharist is enjoined during Lent, whereas for the Greeks it is forbidden on weekdays and replaced by the Presanctified Liturgy, nowadays on Wednesdays and Fridays,[17] though canon 52 of the Synod *in Trullo* decreed that the *Liturgy of the Presanctified* was to be celebrated every weekday during Lent.[18] In the course of these disputes, Alexopoulos suggests, it was noticed that a *Liturgy of the Presanctified* occurs in two late "Gregorian" sacramentaries, assumed to be by Gregory the Great, referred to in the controversies with the Greeks as "Gregory *ho dialogos*". Furthermore, a medieval commentary on the *Ordo Romanus* asserts that the Presanctified Liturgy was in use in Rome by the time of Gregory the Great. Given these facts it is plausible that ascription of the *Liturgy of the Presanctified* to Gregory was bound up with justifying the Byzantine practice of celebrating the *Liturgy of the Presanctified* on weekdays during Lent.[19]

Transmission of the Dialogi

That leaves us with the Greek translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*, made by Pope Zacharias in the first half of the 8th century.[20] As we have seen, this became so popular that Gregory acquired the nickname

[17] The history of the days on which the Liturgy of the Presanctified has been celebrated in the Byzantine rite is complex: see Alexopoulos, *Presanctified Liturgy*, pp. 58–80.

[18] Canon 52, in *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, eds George Nedungatt and Michael Featherstone, Kanonika 6 (Rome, 1995), p. 133.

[19] For more on this highly plausible argument, see Alexopoulos, *Presanctified Liturgy*, pp. 53–5.

[20] On Pope Zacharias, see Andrew J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes: Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, 590–752 A.D.* (Lanham, MD, 2007), especially the epilogue, pp. 298–303. Some version of Zacharias' Greek translation is printed in parallel columns to the Latin text in Migne (PL 77:147–430, including Zacharias' translation of the anonymous preface).

ho dialogos.[21] Pope Zacharias' translation was regarded as sufficiently significant for it to be recorded as the last item (save for the record of his ordinations) in his entry in the *Liber Pontificalis*.[22] It is possible, as Raymond Davis suggests in a note to his translation, that the wording ("enlightened many who do not know how to read Latin") implies that the translation was primarily made for Greek monasteries in Rome and Italy, but it seems to have soon circulated widely in the East. The earliest evidence for the availability of Gregory's *Dialogi* in Byzantium is found, about a century after their translation, in Photius' collection of book reviews, called *Bibliotheca* ("The Library").[23] Photius does not exactly review the *Dialogi* themselves—his entry is on extracts from a Greek *vita* of Gregory—but he immediately mentions Gregory's "four dialogues most profitable for living" (*biophelestatous tessaras dialogous*). From the Greek *vita* he is commenting on, he relates two stories. In the first, Gregory is approached three times in the same day by a beggar, and three times Gregory gives him the same generous sum. In the second, Gregory is giving a meal to twelve poor men, but it seems that there are thirteen, the thirteenth being different from the others. When Gregory approaches him, the thirteenth poor man reveals himself to be the beggar of the first story, who is in reality an angel; because of Gregory's generosity, he has been deputed by God to look after the pope. Photius also remarks that Gregory had composed in Latin many works profitable for the soul (*psychôpheleis*), including homilies on the gospel, that he had "laboured to gather together remarkable lives of people in Italy that taught the way to salvation in four dialogues", and that Zacharias had translated not only Gregory's *Dialogi*, but other valuable works. Alas, there is no trace of these.[24]

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[21] About twenty-five years ago, Francis Clark raised doubts about the authenticity of the *Dialogues* (Francis Clark, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, 2 vols, [Leiden, 1987]). Clark's doubts have not been widely accepted, and I follow the consensus. See the discussion of Lake in his chapter *supra*.

[22] *LP* (ed. Louis Duchesne [Paris, 1886], 1:435); trans. Raymond Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis). The Ancient Biographies of Nine Popes from AD 715 to AD 817*, Translated Texts for Historians 13 (Liverpool, 1992), p. 50.

[23] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, codex 252 (ed. René Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque* [Paris, 1974], pp. 207–9).

[24] Photius is oddly precise about the date of the translation of the *Dialogi*, saying that "for 165 years only those who used the language of the Romans could profit from his labours", which implies that Photius thought the *Dialogi* had been composed by Gregory in 587 at the latest; the scholarly consensus is 593/4: see *Patrologia* 4, *I Padri latini* (*secoli V–VIII*), ed. Angelo Di Berardino (Genoa, 1996), pp. 166–7.

"Most profitable for living" and "profitable for the soul": the *Dialogi* (and indeed what we know of the Greek *vita* of St. Gregory from Photius) belong to the genre of "tales profitable for the soul" (*diêgêseis psychôpheleis*), or "spiritually beneficial tales", as John Wortley has it, a scholar who has devoted much of his time to studying and translating works in this genre.[25] It was an immensely popular genre, both in the East and in the West, early examples including Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca* and the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, as well as John Moschus' *Pratum spirituale*; a later example is found in the *Spiritually Beneficial Tales of Paul, Bishop of Monemvasia* (10th-century). Such works contain the raw materials for the fully-fledged saint's *vita*.

Gregory's *Dialogi* are more than a collection of "tales profitable for the soul".[26] Such a description fits well Books 1 and 3 of the *Dialogi*, which gather together stories, mostly miraculous, from 6th-century Italy. Book 3 contains two groups of stories that are a little different: some stories about the martyrdom of Christians by the pagan Lombards, who invaded Italy in the 6th century (*Dial.* 3.27, 28, 31); and other stories in which the miracles are used as evidence of the truth of Orthodoxy over against Arianism (*Dial.* 3.29, 30, 32).[27] There is also a chapter devoted to the different forms of compunction, illustrated by an allegorical interpretation of a story from the Old Testament (*Dial.* 3.34). Books 2 and 4 are rather different: Book 2 is in effect a life of the great monk St. Benedict, while Book 4 is more like a real dialogue on death and the afterlife, dealing with problems such as the nature of the soul, how the soul departs from the body at death, the nature of hell and its fires (and purgatorial fire), the power of intercession and especially of the Eucharistic sacrifice.[28]

In another respect, Gregory's *Dialogi* differ from "tales profitable for the soul", for they are, as the title indicates, dialogues: dialogues in which Gregory is in conversation with one of his deacons, named Peter.[29] This

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[25] See, especially, his "Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell in Byzantine 'Beneficial Tales'," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001), 53–69.

[26] Ed. Adalbert de Vogüé with intro. and notes, trans. Paul Antin, SC 251, 260, 265 (Paris, 1978–80).

[27] This polemical use of "tales profitable for the soul" was already well-established in the wake of the Council of Chalcedon, in the context of the controversy between the Orthodox and those they called "monophysites": on the monophysite side, see John Rufus' *Plêrophoriai* ("Assurances") (ed. François Nau, Patrologia Orientalia 8.1 [Paris, 1912]), and on the Orthodox side, John Moschos' *Pratum spirituale* (PG 87C:2852–3112).

[28] For more detail, see Petersen, *Dialogues*.

[29] The use of the genre of dialogue in a hagiographical context was already well-established: cf. Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi libri II de vita sancti Martini*, which may well have

enables Gregory to draw out the point of the tales he tells, and—especially in the final book—to discuss various problems concerning the afterlife.

The very affinity with the tradition of "tales profitable for the soul" that led to the translation of the *Dialogi* by Pope Zacharias makes it difficult to trace their influence in the Byzantine world. For the most part, Gregory simply provides one further source of these much-loved tales, and his contribution is thus fairly indistinguishable. One area in which Gregory's tales were to have a significant influence on the Byzantine mind was the nature of the afterlife, both how to interpret the imagery used to depict it, and also what kind of relations held between this world and the next.[30] However, there is one work that draws on Gregory's *Dialogi* through substantial quotations, and thus gives us the chance to see in some detail the nature of the influence of Gregory's *Dialogi* on the Byzantine mind. That work is the massive compilation of material on the nature and problems of the monastic life, the *Synagôgê* of Paul Evergetinus, the founder of the Constantinopolitan monastery of the "Beneficent Mother of God" (*Theotokos evergetis*).[31]

Paul Evergetinus' Synagôgê

Paul's *Synagôgê*, or *Evergetinon*, was a very popular book in the Byzantine world, to judge from the number of manuscripts that survive,[32] so I think we can take it as a fairly reliable index of the influence of Gregory's *Dialogi* in the Byzantine world, especially among monastics (though it is possible, even likely, that its readership was not confined to monks). It is a huge work in four books, each of which treats fifty *hypotheses* or topics

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influenced Gregory (CSEL 1:152–216), and in the East, Palladius' *Dialogus de vita sancti Johannis Chrysostomi* (SC 341).

[30] See Jane Baun, *Tales from Another Byzantium. Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (Cambridge, 2007), esp. pp. 137–44; eadem, "Last Things," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, 3. Early Medieval Christianities, c.600–c.1100* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 606–24.

[31] On the monastery of the *Theotokos evergetis*, see Margaret Mullett and Anthony Kirby (eds), *The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism*, Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 6, vol. 1 (Belfast, 1994), and eidem, *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis*, Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 6, vol. 2 (Belfast, 1997); and more briefly, my *Greek East and Latin West: the Church AD 681–1071* (Crestwood NY, 2007), pp. 281–85.

[32] 68 known: see John Wortley, "The Genre and Sources of the *Synagoge*," in *The Theotokos Evergetis*, eds Mullett and Kirby, pp. 306–24, here 306. I have used the edition by Matthew Laggis: *Evergetinos itoi Synagogi*, with a modern Greek translation, 4 vols, 6th ed. (Athens, 1992–93).

by compiling a catena of (often quite substantial) extracts from a variety of sources: the *Gerontikon* ("Sayings of the Desert Fathers"), Ephrem the Syrian (in reality the "Greek" Ephrem), Isaias of Scetis, Mark the Hermit, Maximus the Confessor, Palladius, Gregory *ho dialogos*, Isaac the Syrian, Diadochus of Photikê, Barsanouphius of Gaza, Antiochus author of the *Pandects*, the *Life* of Synklêtiki, in diminishing frequency of citation, and various other sources cited only a few times.[33] The *Synagôgê* is, then, a florilegium, a popular genre in Byzantine theological literature. It can be compared with other, similarly monastic works, such as the 7th-century *Pandects* of Antiochus (from whom he draws) and the 8th-century *Hiera*, attributed (probably correctly) to John of Damascus, called in western manuscripts the *Sacra parallela*. The range and frequency of sources cited holds few surprises: the *Gerontikon* is the most popular by a long way (217 citations); the next most frequent is Ephrem with 111 citations; Gregory's *Dialogues* occupies a median position, along with Maximus the Confessor, Palladius, and Isaac the Syrian, all with citations in the 40s.

The four books of the *Synagôgê* deal with the monastic life in a progressive way. The first book relates to the practical aspects of withdrawal from the world; the second of issues relating to life in community—psalmody, work, care of the goods of the monastery—and includes a chapter on self-love (*philautia*), the remedy for which is found in the demands of life in community. Book 3 is concerned with making the virtues one's own, with issues such as behaviour under temptation, the constant need for grace, and the importance of conscience as God's gift—that peculiarly monastic temptation, *accidie* or listlessness, is also discussed. The final book deals with the aim of the monastic life, union with God, and so discusses tranquillity (*hesychia*), love of God, dereliction, unceasing prayer, *lectio divina*, and also topics such as intellect (*nous*), contemplation (*theoria*), grace, theology, and dispassion (*apatheia*). There are no surprises here, either, which presumably accounts for its widespread popularity. What little literature there is on the *Synagôgê* generally seeks to compare Paul Evergetinus with Symeon the New Theologian, who belonged to the immediately preceding generation (Symeon's dates are probably 949–1022; Paul died in 1054), and finds in Paul a more conservative and sober monastic teacher.[34]

[33] See Wortley, "The Genre," 314.

[34] See the excellent brief article by Gregory Collins, "A Neglected Manual of the Spiritual Life: the *Synagoge* of Paul Evergetinos," *Sobornost/incorporating Eastern Churches Review* 12:1 (1990), 47–51, on which I have based this paragraph.

The quotations from Gregory's *Dialogues* are spread fairly evenly over the four books of the *Synagôgê*,[35] though such even usage is true of most of the sources Paul uses at all regularly. There is also a quotation from the Greek *Bios* of St. Gregory: oddly the very same passage that Photius cites in the *Bibliotheca* (comparison reveals that it has been very considerably abbreviated in Photius' telling of the story).[36] If we look at the topics for which Paul Evergetinus turns to Gregory for citations, we may say that the largest group concern matters monastic (about twenty-five), and within that group there is a large subgroup concerned with authority, while the next largest group concerns death, dreams, and the afterlife; otherwise, it seems to be odd issues for which Paul turns to Gregory—liturgical music, providence, the value of pilgrimage.

To gain a precise picture of how Paul uses Gregory the Great in his presentation of the monastic life, it is necessary first to trace in some detail how Paul understands the development of the monastic life. The *Synagôgê* is such a huge work that, for this paper, we shall confine our attention to Book 1. As one reads through the list of *hypotheses*, it quickly becomes apparent that we are not dealing here, as in some florilegia, with a random collection of points to be considered: there is a very clear structure behind Paul's marshalling of his authorities. He begins by emphasizing the fundamental role of repentance (1.1–4); this leads naturally to thought of death and final judgment, and the joys of heaven (1.5–6). Consideration of the last things leads to a group of *hypotheses* on death and what happens when the soul is separated from the body (1.7–11). Thought of departure from this life recalls our entry into this life, and what we owe to our parents (1.12), and this leads to a series of reflections on the central monastic virtue of *xeniteia*, the state of being an alien in this world once one has abandoned it (1.13–17). Such *xeniteia* must be uncompromised, and issue in an equal love for those who are sharing such a life (1.16). This leads to another fundamental virtue, that of submission, *hypotagê* (1.19 ff.), which Paul pursues, balancing detachment from self and the world with submission to the "fathers", and in particular to one's own spiritual father (1.20, 21). To live in this state of detachment and submission, endurance or patience (*hypomonê*) is necessary (1.28 ff.), and Paul speaks particularly of the patience that is demanded of the monk whose spiritual father is negligent or ignorant (1.33–39). Such patience manifests a belief and trust

[35] 12 in Book 1; 15 in Book 2; 7 in Book 3; 11 in Book 4.
[36] *Synagôgê* 3.46.1 (ed. Laggis, 3:578–79).

in providence, in God who works everything for good for those who love him (1.38, 43). Living such a life manifests itself in humility, the absolute basis of the monks' lives (1.44–8), which should be manifest in external matters, too, such as what they wear (1.49). A final hypothesis underlines the absolute necessity of detachment (1.50).

There is manifest here a clear and very traditional structure; it recalls the underlying structure of John of Sinai's *Ladder of Divine Ascent*. How, then, does Paul draw on Gregory as he presents this picture of monastic progress? Paul cites Gregory in ten of the *hypotheses*. They are:[37]

1.7 That frequently the souls of the virtuous are comforted in death by a certain divine overshadowing, and so they are separated from the body.

1.8 Concerning those who depart and are again called back, that this takes place in accordance with the divine economy; and that frequently sinners, still breathing, behold the punishments of hell and tremble at the demons; and that so they are separated from the body.

1.9 Proof of how the souls of the dead depart, and of their state after separation.

1.11 How like are ranked with like after death.

1.15 How it is necessary for those who have abandoned [the world] not to mingle with their relatives according to the flesh or have any sympathy for them.

1.22 That it is necessary to turn away from the way things turn out for inattentive people and their troubles, and that alienation from worldly matters is necessary for one who wants to be saved.

1.33 That it is necessary for the faithful [monk] to accept eagerly what his spiritual father prescribes as fitting, even if it is grievous and arduous; for the mercy of God is given for this goal, as are tribulations.

1.34 That it is necessary that those who are set over us in the Lord should be obeyed until death, and that they are to be loved and feared.

1.35 That it is necessary to submit to those set over us in the Lord with simplicity and to receive their judgments as from God without questioning, and not to review them or amend them, even if they do not appear appropriate to the present moment.

1.39 That it is necessary for the faithful [monk] not to be bold in himself, but to believe, as through his own spiritual father, and be saved and be capable of every good, and to ask for his prayers; for they are mighty.

[37] *Synagôgê* 1 (ed. Laggis, vol. 1).

There are twelve citations from Gregory in all, for two of the *hypotheses* (1. 8, 11) are supported by two citations each from the *Dialogues*. The first six—half of them—concern the question of death (supporting *hypotheses* 1.7, 8, 9, 11); the next two concern detachment—from our earthly relatives (1.15) and from the negligent and worldly (1.22); the last four are concerned with the authority of the spiritual father (1.33, 34, 35, 39). Five of the first six are from book 4 of the *Dialogues*, which we have already noted was a valued source of information about the afterlife; the other is from Book 2, the life of St. Benedict, and includes the account of Benedict's foreseeing his own death. The last four are concerned with spiritual authority, a topic that, along with the afterlife, dominates Paul's borrowings from Gregory in general, as we have seen.

The Premonition of Death

Hypothesis 7[38] is concerned with the premonition of death, in the form of a "certain divine overshadowing", with which some of the virtuous are comforted as death approaches. Apart from a long extract from Gregory, there are also three other brief extracts: the account of the death of Anthimus from Cyril of Scythopolis' *Vita* of St. Sabas (*Sabas* 43); the account of the heavenly liturgy Daniel the Stylite celebrated three days before his death (*Vita* 96); and the story of Sisoes from the *Gerontikon* about how St. Antony and other saints and angels came to fetch this "vessel of the desert" at his death (*Sisoes* 14). The extract from Cyril of Scythopolis is somewhat abridged; the others seem quite accurate transcriptions. These three short extracts are prefaced by a long quotation from Gregory, consisting of several stories from Book 4 of the *Dialogi*. The first tells of a priest from the region of Nursia, who is visited by the apostles Peter and Paul on the fortieth anniversary of his priesthood, and dies shortly afterwards: the moral is explicit: "that it often happens to the just, that at their death they have visions of saints who have gone before, so that they do not fear the penal sentence of their death" (*Dial.* 4.12). Then a story is told of Probus, bishop of Rieti, who is visited on his deathbed by the martyrs, St. Juvenal and St. Eleutherius (*Dial.* 4.13). Next there is the account of Servulus, already told by Gregory in his homilies on the gospels,[39] as

[38] *Synagôgê* 1 (ed. Laggis, 1:102–19).

[39] Gregory, *HEv.* 15.5. De Vogüé remarks that this is the first of nine stories in Book 4, recycled from the Homilies (SC 265:60, n. 2).

he remarks, who, on his deathbed, hears heavenly music and, as his soul departs, a wonderful fragrance is diffused (*tanta fragrantia odoris—tosautê osphrêsis euôdias*) (*Dial.* 4.14). There follows the story of Redempta, also taken from the *Homilia in evangelia*,[40] whose death is presaged by a dazzling brightness, such that the hearts of those who perceive it are gripped with an unspeakable fear, while just before her death, there is heard a heavenly choir of men's and women's voices, singing psalms antiphonally (*Dial.* 4.16). Another story from the *Homilia* is told[41] about his aunt, Tarsilla, who before her death was visited by Pope Felix, her relative, and shown her dwelling place of light (*mansio lucis*), and who then, on her deathbed, surrounded by her relations, has a vision of Christ (*Dial.* 4.17). Paul then relates a story Gregory says he had heard from Probus, already mentioned, about his little sister Musa, who had a vision of blessed Mary, ever Virgin, surrounded by young girls. Musa wanted to join them but dared not. Mary tells her that she can join them in thirty days if she lives a sober and serious life. After twenty-five days, she succumbed to a fever, and saw blessed Mary and her maidens again in a dream before she died (*Dial.* 4.18).[42] Paul omits a discussion about how, although newly baptized babies go to heaven, those who can speak can commit sins that will carry them to hell (*Dial.* 4.18.4–19.4),[43] and continues with the next story, again drawn from the *Homilies on the Gospels*, though expanded, about a priest called Stephen (*Dial.* 4.20). Paul then records Gregory's view that sometimes the fate of the just is not made known before death, but afterwards; the best example being the power of the relics of the holy martyrs (*Dial.* 4.21). Having followed Gregory fairly closely through several chapters,[44] Paul now jumps ahead in Book 4 to section 49 for his two final stories, one about Antony[45] who had the gift of tears and who, five days before his death, has a dream telling him to get ready to migrate, at the Lord's command (*Dial.* 4.49.2–3), and the other about Merulus, given to tears and almsgiving, and constant in psalmody, who has a vision of a crown

[40] *HEv.* 40.11.

[41] *HEv.* 38.15.

[42] There is not a great deal in Gregory about devotion to Mary, but this small piece of evidence brings to mind the legend that the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Extremadura was a gift from Pope Gregory to his friend, Leander, bishop of Seville, the image itself having arrived in Rome as a gift from Constantinople to ward off the plague that was afflicting Rome at the time.

[43] On the story of unbaptized babies, see below.

[44] *Dial.* 4.12–15, 16–18, 20–21 = *Synagôgê* 1.7.1–8 (first paragraph).

[45] Again with parallels in the homilies on the gospels: cf., *HEv.* 37.9.

of white flowers coming down from heaven to rest on his head. He dies shortly afterwards. Fourteen years later, the prior of the monastery, Peter, wants to build a proper tomb for Merulus, because of the fragrance of such sweetness, like the scent of many flowers that emanated from his relics (*Dial.* 4.49.4–5).

It is not difficult to see why Paul makes so much of Gregory on this question of the premonition of death. The Greek accounts are terse and compelling, but Gregory has story after story, illustrating the theme in different ways: visions of saints, angels, Christ, and the Virgin Mary, heavenly music and sweet-smelling fragrance.

The Afterlife

Paul also makes use of the questions placed in Peter's mouth in the *Dialogi*, as a way of bringing out significant points. In *Hypothesis* 11, both the extracts from Gregory cited include one of Peter's questions. This *hypothesis* is about the ranking of souls in the afterlife. Paul begins with a composite extract from Gregory: first, a discussion of the many mansions, promised in the gospel (John 14:2), followed by a discussion of the separation of the just from the sinners at the judgment in the light of Matt. 13:30 (*Dial.* 4.36.13–14). Paul then jumps to a later passage in Book 4, where Peter asks if it will not be the case in the last days that much that has remained hidden about souls will be made manifest, to which Gregory replies that this is indeed the case, and that as the age to come makes itself felt through its closeness, more manifest signs will appear. Gregory goes on to speak, in rather Augustinian terms, about our crepuscular knowledge yielding before the rising of the sun (*Dial.* 4.43.1–2). The last extract in *Hypothesis* 11 is again from Gregory: the passage from Book 4 of the *Dialogi*, in fact the passage omitted in the long extract in *Syn.* 1.7, already discussed. The passage is introduced by Peter's question, or rather his comment, that, because of the many and immeasurable passions to which mankind is subject, he assumes that most of those in the heavenly Jerusalem will be babies and infants. Gregory rather chillingly replies that baptized babies who die can be assured of a place in the heavenly kingdom, but that as soon as they can speak they are capable of sins that will lead to their damnation, illustrating this with a story (*Dial.* 4.18.4–19.4). Paul follows Gregory in using Peter's queries to introduce particular points of exegesis, or in the last *hypothesis*, difficult and puzzling issues.

Spiritual Authority

The other main preoccupation in *Synagôgê* Book 1 for which Paul draws on Gregory is the question of spiritual authority. In *Hypothesis* 33, he tells the story from the beginning of the *Dialogi* about how Libertinus' endurance of the violence of his abbot brings the abbot himself to gentleness (*Dial.* 1.2.8–10); Paul places at the end of the story a comment that in Gregory's account introduces the story, thus giving it prominence as the moral of the story: "I believe this power of endurance to be very much greater than the signs and wonders that this great man did." It is not necessary to go through the rest. Suffice it to say that Paul finds in Gregory many stories that reflect on the nature of submission to a spiritual father or superior, even in paradoxical circumstances. This concern for submission to a superior recalls the interest in hierarchy, noted by Carole Straw above,[46] as a point of affinity with the Byzantine tradition, but the passages cited by Paul are more concerned with spiritual authority, than the authority of the clerical hierarchy.

From all this it is evident that Paul values the vividness of the stories told by Gregory, and looks to him especially for guidance on the ever-present problem of the afterlife, as well as the fundamental monastic question of authority, where he finds plenty of support in Gregory for what must seem nowadays a somewhat problematic view that it is submission, obedience, that matters, even if the one to whom one submits is negligent or incompetent.[47] This view, however, is the prevailing view in the ascetic literature of Byzantium. The vividness of Gregory's stories is sometimes dimmed in Paul's telling, though whether this is the fault of Paul's transcription, which often modifies or condenses, or Zacharias' translation, I have not been able to verify. Furthermore, Paul treats Gregory's text with considerable freedom, often abbreviating, or skipping from one place to another. For instance, over the question of whether there is forgiveness after death (4.31), Paul begins with the five biblical quotations that he found in *Dial.* 4. 41.1, which lay stress on acting now (John 12:35; Isa. 49:8; 2 Cor. 6:2; Eccles. 9:10; Ps. 117:1), and continues with a mention of "light and little sins", which Gregory says will be taken seriously after death, if not

[46] See n. 4 above.

[47] It is worth noting, perhaps, that it is often to Gregory that Paul turns first in giving his list of *exempla*: twenty-seven times the citation from Gregory is placed first, so if there is a citation from Gregory, it is very likely to head the list.

already expiated. Paul, however, says something quite different: that they can be forgiven after death by "the prayers of the living, acts of mercy, and the offering of sacred sacrifice", which summarizes what Gregory says later on, though I cannot find a precise parallel (cf. 4.57.2). Paul then continues with a closely-followed passage from *Dial.* 4, in which Peter questions Gregory over the fires of hell and the justice of eternal torment (4.46.1–47. 2). It is probably not significant that Paul omits any mention of purgatorial fire, beginning his selection with Gregory's response to Peter's question about this issue (*Dial.* 4.40.13).

Conclusion

Gregory's affinity with the spirituality of the Byzantine world made him welcome there. His *Dialogi* became popular in Byzantium, first of all, because they fitted so well with the genre of "tales profitable for the soul", already popular in Byzantine ascetic literature. His influence is further found in certain specific areas where he had something distinctive to contribute—notably, the afterlife and the relationship between this life and the next, and the question of spiritual authority—which he expressed largely in the form of vivid and memorable tales. To judge from Paul Evergetinus' use of Gregory in the *Synagôgê*, the Byzantine reception of Gregory was selective, and perhaps tended to present him as more of a Byzantine than he really was. It is, at any rate, hard to point to anything specific in Byzantine spirituality that we can label "Gregorian".

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE RECEPTION OF GREGORY IN THE RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION[1]

Ann Kuzdale

An unpublished chronicle of a monk at the Benedictine monastery of Sts. Ulrich and Afra, in the diocese of Augsburg, may explain in part why the works of Gregory the Great were important for some people in the early modern period. The monk Witwer relates that Abbot Melchior,[2]

> although dissuaded by all his friends, resolved in 1472 to set up a printing press in the monastery itself to the glory of God and to the advancement of the Catholic Church, and also, to increase the revenue of the monastery, he insisted on having printed with metal type the *Dialogues* of Gregory on morals in the vernacular. It was finished in 1473.

While Abbot Melchior's may be the most pragmatic example, Gregory the Great's works continued to be sought after for many reasons by the humanists of the Renaissance and the theologians of the Reformation era as worthy of reading, worthy of study, and worthy of publishing.[3]

Gregory the Great (590–604) was a Doctor of the Church, an established theological authority by the 9th century.[4] Citations of all his works,

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[1] I wish to thank Drs. John King, James Bracken, and Mark Rankin for allowing me to begin work on this project during an NEH 2009 Summer Seminar, "The History of the Book," as well as Drs. Dale Kinney and Birgitta Lindros Wohl for an earlier seminar opportunity, "The Marvels of Rome," in 1999.

[2] J. Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York: Morgan PML 130 (checklist F 311). *Dialogorum libri quattuor*, ed. and trans. Johannes von Speyer (Augsburg, 1473 and 1476): "ob laudem Dei et universalis Ecclesiae utilitatem nec non sui Monasterii rerum temporalium adcrescentium, nisus est imprimere stanneis characteribus Dialogorum beati Gregorii in moralibus in vulgari qui finitus est 1473."

[3] See the Appendix below for a preliminary list of Latin editions of Gregory's works. By the 17th century most of Gregory's works had been published in vernacular translations.

[4] Before he was officially acknowledged as a Doctor as such by the Frankish Carolingians, he was *doctor egregius* in 7th-century Spain. His works, the *Moralia* and the *Dialogues*, appeared in Spain earlier than elsewhere in northern Europe and were used extensively by 7th-century Spanish authors. J.N. Hillgarth, "Las Fuentes de San Julián de Toledo," *Anales Toledanos*, 3 (1971), 97–118, at 103–04, discusses the use of this title in the 6th and 7th-centuries. In England, the Anonymous author of the *Whitby Life of Gregory* christened him "our Gregory" and "golden-mouthed," (*The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*

especially the *Moralia in Iob*, by major and minor authors of the early Middle Ages indicate an early and wide circulation.[5] He influenced medieval hagiography by his emphasis in the *Dialogues* on the living holy man and the need to publicize miracles, most clearly shown in that work's second book, the *Life of St. Benedict.* His homilies, *Pastoral Care*, and his extant correspondence, the *Registrum*, influenced ecclesiology, especially ideas on conversion and the responsibility bishops and priests had for preaching to souls in their care. In German monasteries, Gregory's works made up the core of monastic education while in the Low Countries, his pastoral theology appealed to the followers of the *devotio moderna.*[6] The list of authors who were influenced by Gregory's writings reads like a who's who of medieval spirituality. In medieval theological commentaries, Gregory was ranked second to Augustine whose authority trumped that of all the Latin fathers of the Church, but this never diminished the regard in which Gregory was held and continued to be held into the modern period.[7]

Throughout the Middle Ages, stories or legends about Gregory's life and interpretations and interpolations about his thought found their way into popular religious expression and art. The story of the scribe peeking behind the curtain who sees Gregory dictating while a dove hovers nearby was first mentioned in the *Whitby Life of Gregory* and can be found in works of art from the 9th century onward. Gregory's association with the dove became as iconic as Jerome's lion or Benedict's crow.[8] Gregory had elaborated on the later Augustine's views on apocalypticism and eschatology that saw a coalescence of the material and spirit worlds which

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by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave [Lawrence, KA, 1968], p. 117); in Ireland he was "Gregory of the *Moralia*": see Luned Mair Davies, "The 'Mouth of Gold': Gregorian Texts in the *Collectio Canonum hibernensis*," in *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission*, eds Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Portland, OR, 2002), pp. 249–67 at 253.

[5] *Codices Latini Antiquiores; a Paleographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century*, ed. Elias Avery Lowe, 11 vols (Oxford, 1934–66) and its *Supplement*, ed. Elias Avery Lowe (Oxford, 1971), which indicates that the earliest fragments of Gregory's works date from the 7th century.

[6] Johannes Schilling, "Luther und Gregor der Grosse," in *Auctoritas Patrum, Contributions on the Reception of the Church Fathers in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, eds Lief Grane et al., 2 vols (Mainz, 1993 and 1998), 1:175–84.

[7] Since the 9th-century Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Gregory were acknowledged as the Latin Doctors of the Church. Gregory was an established theological authority in Spain and England before this.

[8] *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, ed. Colgrave, pp. 122–23. See also J. Croquison, "Les origins de l'iconographie grégorienne," *Cahiers archéologiques* 12 (1962), 249–62, at 262, and Gerhart B. Ladner, *Die Papstbildnisse des Altertums des Mittelaters* (Vatican, 1941).

made conversion and penance, including the need for the soul's purgation before salvation, all the more urgent.[9] In 13th-century France and England, *St. Gregory's Trental*, a year-long series of thirty masses said for a soul in purgatory, developed into a popular devotion that continued through the Reformation era in spite of official Church protest against it.[10] In Spain, Gregory appeared in the legend of Our Lady of Guadalupe where a herdsman, directed by the Virgin, found a statue of her that Gregory had allegedly sent to Leander of Seville. The statue had lain buried and undiscovered in the mountains near the Guadalupe River, hidden there by priests in flight during the time of the Moorish invasions.[11] The most popular artistic representation of Gregory by the later Middle Ages was "The Mass of St. Gregory," a conflation of the legend of Gregory and the doubting matron, and the appearance of Christ as "the Man of Sorrows" to Gregory while he was saying Mass.[12] The image was said to have inspired Pope Gregory to grant an indulgence to all who said five *Paternosters* and five *Ave Marias* before an image of the Man of Sorrows. This "Prayer of St. Gregory" (*Oratio sancti Gregorii*) became an "indulgenced" picture popular in England.[13] One of the first Christian religious images produced in

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[9] J.N. Hillgarth, "Eschatological and Political Concepts in the Seventh Century," in *The Seventh Century: Change and Continuity*, Proceedings of a Joint French and British Colloquium held at the Warburg Institute 8–9 July 1988, eds Jacques Fontaine and J.N. Hillgarth (London, 1992), pp. 212–35. See further Baun's chapter *infra*.

[10] Richard W. Pfaff, "The English Devotion of St. Gregory's Trental," *Speculum* 49:1 (1974), 74–90; R.R. Atwell, "From Augustine to Gregory the Great: an Evaluation of the Emergence of the Doctrine of Purgatory," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38 (1987), 173–86; Penny J. Cole, "Purgatory and Crusade in St. Gregory's Trental," *The International History Review* 17: 4 (1995), 713–25; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 293–98 and 370–76.

[11] William J. Christian, Jr., *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton, NJ, 1981), pp. 88–92.

[12] *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* 20 (ed. Colgrave, pp. 105–09) tells the original legend of Gregory saying Mass during which a woman in the congregation doubted that the bread which she had baked really became the body of Christ; during the Mass a bloody finger appeared on the altar to prove the real presence in the Eucharist. See also Michael Heinlen, "An Early Image of a Mass of St. Gregory and Devotion to the Holy Blood at Weingarten Abbey," *Gesta* 37:1 (1998), 55–62. A detailed analysis and bibliography can be found in Uwe Westfehling, *Die Messe Gregors des Grossen, Vision–Kunst–Realität. Katalog und Führer zu einer Ausstellung im Schnütgen-Museum der Stadt Köln* (Cologne, 1982); the most recent interpretation is Caroline Walker Bynum, "Seeing and Seeing Beyond: The Mass of St. Gregory in the Fifteenth Century," in *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, eds Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton, 2006), pp. 204–40.

[13] Martha W. Driver, *The Image in Print: Book Illustration in Late Medieval England and its Sources* (London, 2004), pp. 206–8. See also Christine Göttler, *Last Things. Art and the*

the Spanish New World was an Aztec "featherwork" of the Mass of St. Gregory from 1539.[14]

By the 15th century all important monastic, university, royal, or private library collections contained copies of Gregory's works. Within ten years of Gutenberg's first Bible (1456), Gregory's *Pastoral Care* and his *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles* were published; ten years after that came the *Moralia, Dialogues*, and *Homilies on the Gospels*. By 1490, less than forty years after the first Gutenberg Bible, all of Gregory's major works and even some wrongly attributed to him were in print.[15]

The earliest printed work of Gregory's that I have identified is the 1460 *Liber regula pastoralis*, published in Mainz by Johann Fust and Peter Schöffer.[16] A few vernacular translations of Gregory's works appeared in print by the 1470s and 1480s, although it was not until the 1608 publication of the *Dialogues* that any works of Gregory appeared in print in English.[17] Collected works of Gregory in manuscript form, either written as such or bound together for that function, existed in the Middle Ages, but the earliest printed *opera omnia* collection of his works is from Berthold Rembolt in 1518 in Paris.[18]

The Augsburg text of Abbot Melchior's published *Dialogues* mentioned above was one of the first German editions of Gregory's works to be printed. In addition to the admission that the *Dialogues* might be a money-maker for the monastery, by combining several works together thematically, this composite work reflects a continuity of the medieval way of reading, one that focuses on subject rather than author, as James Hankins has described.[19] Abbot Melchior's volume contained German

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Religious Imagination in the Age of Reform (Turnhout, 2010), ch. 1, "Indulgenced Prints of St. Gregory's Miraculous Mass."

[14] Donna Pierce, Rogelio Ruiz Gomar, and Clara Bargellini, *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life, 1521–1821*, exhibition catalogue, Denver Art Museum (Denver, 2004), pp. 94–102, describes this Mass of St. Gregory as a featherwork on wood from the School of San José de los Naturales (Mexico) given to Pope Paul in thanks for his protection of Amerindian rights. The original is now in Musée des Jacobins (Auch, France).

[15] Works attributed to Gregory included *De Conflictu vitiorum et virtutum* (Utrecht, 1473) and the *Expositio in VII psalmos poenitentiales* (Mainz, 1495).

[16] See Appendix below.

[17] *The Dialogues of S. Gregorie, surnamed the Greate: Pope of Rome*, trans. Philip Woodward (Paris [i.e. Douai], 1608). See also Mark Vessey, "English Translations of the Latin Fathers, 1517–1611," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West from the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus, 2 vols (Boston—Leiden, 2001), 2:775–835.

[18] See Appendix below. Lester K. Little, "Calvin's Appreciation of Gregory the Great," *Harvard Theological Review* 56:2 (1963), 145–57, at 148.

[19] Charles L. Stinger, "Italian Renaissance Learning and the Church Fathers," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: from the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus, 2 vols (Boston—Leiden, 2001), 1:473–507, at 474–75, cites James Hankins, *Plato in*

translations of the "Vision of Tondal," the "Miraculous legend of Bishop Fursey," a miracle from the *Speculum Mundi*, the *Ars moriendi*, and an extract from the *Tractatus quattuor novissimorum*.[20] That the *Dialogues* of Gregory was set within the context of vision or miracle literature and two of the works in this 15th-century collection, the *Life of Fursey* and the *Vision of the Knight Tondal*, drew heavily on Gregory's *Dialogues* itself, indicates how Gregory and his work were perceived.

Much groundwork has been laid by intellectual historians on the use and influence of patristic authorities in the Renaissance and Reformation, although how best to measure this influence or even how to date the Renaissance and Reformation is still debated.[21] John Monfasani and others caution that there is a distinction between those who truly knew or used or were influenced by patristic authors and those who were merely "compilers" or "respectful" of them.[22] Yet recent contributions and collections continue to reveal substantial appreciation and understanding of the Latin and Greek fathers, and Gregory in particular, by Renaissance and Reformation readers.[23]

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the Italian Renaissance, 2 vols (Leiden, 1990), 1:18–26, that the focus on subject, not author, might best characterize the difference between the medieval and modern view of texts.

[20] *Catalogue of the Manuscripts and Early Printed Books from the Libraries of William Morris, Richard Bennett, Bertram, Fourth Earl of Ashburnham, and Other Sources Now Forming Portion of the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan*, 3 vols (London, 1907), 1:114.

[21] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought. The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (rev. edn New York, 1961), p. 70. Kristeller reminds us that the Renaissance was not as great a break in thought as many 19th-century scholars had thought. For the purposes of this article I will follow the traditional dating of the Renaissance from the late 14th into the 16th century. This overlaps with the Reformation era.

[22] John Monfasani, "Renaissance Humanism" in *Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI—Cambridge, 1999), pp. 713–16, at 714, distinguishes between Bessarion who collected and recorded Augustine's passages on Platonism as an authority, and Marsilio Ficino who acknowledged and quoted Augustine and whose style and doctrines clearly came from Augustine.

[23] For the broadest surveys of this discussion, see Backus, *The Reception of the Church Fathers*; Lief Grane, Alfred Schindler, and Markus Wriedt (eds), *Auctoritas Patrum. Contributions on the Reception of the Church Fathers in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, 2 vols (Mainz, 1993 and 1998). See also Charles L. Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers: Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439) and Christian Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance* (Albany, 1977); idem, "Greek Patristics and Christian Antiquity in Renaissance Rome," in *Rome in the Renaissance: the City and the Myth*, Papers of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, ed. Paul A. Ramsay (Binghamton, NY, 1982), pp. 153–69; Mark Vessey, "Cities of the Mind: Renaissance Views of Early Christian Culture and the End of Antiquity," in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau (Chichester, 2009), pp. 45–58. These works belong alongside earlier studies by Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Contribution of Religious Orders to Renaissance Thought and Learning," *American Benedictine Review* 21 (1970), 1–55, and Giles Constable, "Petrarch and Monasticism,"

This chapter is less a literary survey of the use and influence of Gregory's works than it is about the perception of Gregory in the early modern period by humanists, reformers, popes, and artists that led them to construct conflicting "Gregories". In both the Renaissance and the Reformation, new questions that challenged Christian unity—the significance of Rome, patristic authority, the saints, miracles, the Mass, as well as the nature and role of the papacy itself—affected the status of Gregory as an authority or doctor of the Church. The major figures of the Renaissance and Reformation had a complex and often contradictory relationship with Gregory the Great.

Renaissance Florence

Renaissance Christian humanism, as it was developed in Florence by Petrarch (1304–74) and his circle, stressed classical learning, the arts of discourse (grammar and rhetoric), along with Christian piety and moral philosophy.[24] Petrarch and later Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), the Florentine chancellor, and Ambrogio Traversari (1338–1439), the humanist monk of *S. Maria degli Angeli* in Florence, were more than admirers of the Church fathers. They saw them, in Traversari's words, "as architects of the institutional church, as writers wise and eloquent... as beloved friends," whose works were integral to the literary heritage of the Church, and they encouraged the translation and edition of accurate texts of the Greek and Latin fathers.[25]

Salutati articulated a statement of the humanist programme in his debates with Giovanni da Sanminiato (1360–1428), another monk of *S. Maria degli Angeli*, and the Dominican Giovanni Dominici (1357–1419), who had directly attacked classical studies as unnecessary for the development of faith and a programme of study unsuitable for the young.[26] Salutati countered with St. Basil's argument that the study of classics trained the intellect and inculcated virtues which were essential to preparing the mind and soul to comprehend the deeper mysteries of Holy Scriptures.

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in *Francesco Petrarca: Citizen of the World*, Proceedings of the World Petrarch Congress (Washington DC, April 6–13, 1974), Studi sul Petrarca 8 (Padua, 1980), pp. 53–99.

[24] Stinger, *Humanism*, p. 97. See also Charles Trinkhaus, "Humanist Treatises on the Status of the Religious: Petrarch, Salutati, Valla," *Studies in the Renaissance* 11 (1964), 7–45.

[25] Paul Gehl, "Florentine Humanism and the Church Fathers," *Newberry Library Exhibition*, April–July 2000 programme notes (Chicago, 2000).

[26] Stinger, *Humanism*, p. 11.

"The *studia humanitatis* and the *studia divinitatis* are so connected that true and complete knowledge of one cannot be had without the other."[27] The fathers of the Church, like the ancient pagan authors, were classics but Christian classics, whose works should be translated and disseminated. Giovanni da Sanminiato himself was not untouched by the impulse to make patristic works accessible, and completed an Italian translation of Gregory's *Moralia* that Zanobi da Strada began in the 1350s.[28]

These 14th-century debates reflected the humanist and scholastic divide. The humanists looked to the fathers for their eloquence and emotion in contrast to what they perceived as an arid emphasis on logic by scholastic theologians. Augustine retained pride of place as the leading authority among the Latin fathers, but Jerome, Gregory, Ambrose, Origen and the Greek fathers, Basil, John Chrysostom, and Gregory Nazianzen were equally revered. References to Gregory's *Moralia* appear in Salutati's *De seculo et religione* and there are many references to Gregory from Paul the Deacon's *Vita Gregorii* in Salutati's letters.[29] Lorenzo Valla (1406–57) spoke to the eloquence of the early Church fathers as if they were "playing a perpetual symphony before God... Basil and Ambrose sound the lyre, Gregory Nazianzen and Jerome the cithara, Chrysostom and Augustine the lute, Dionysius and Gregory the Great, the flute," in contrast to the scholastics, "John of Damascus and St. Thomas [who] clash cymbals".[30] Salutati in his debate with Dominici had earlier noted that the two most poetic books of the Bible, the Canticle of Canticles and the Book of Job, were the ones upon which Gregory had commented, thus attesting to Gregory's own eloquence.[31]

Extant library inventories from private lists, monasteries, and royal inventories reveal what fathers were collected and read. Pearl Kibre notes

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[27] Stinger, *Humanism*, pp. 11–12. Vessey, "Cities of the Mind," p. 51, cautions against the idea that humanists tried to "reconstitute ancient Christian culture".

[28] Stinger, *Humanism*, p. 13.

[29] Coluccio Salutati, *De seculo et religione*, ed. B.L. Ullman (Florence, 1957); *Epistolario di Coluccio Salutati*, ed. Francesco Novati (Rome, 1891–1905); and *De fato et fortuna*, ed. Concetta Bianca (Florence, 1985).

[30] Stinger, *Humanism*, pp. 59–60.

[31] Ibid., p. 9, cites Salutati, *Epistolario* (ed. Novati, 3:290), "Is it possible that anyone can be considered so foolish and senile, so deceived by false opinion as to condemn the poets with whose words Jerome overflows, Augustine glistens, and Ambrose blossoms? Gregory and Bernard are not devoid of them, and on them the vessel of election himself (St. Paul) did not consider it foolish to rely." In the same place Stinger quotes Petrarch: "[W]hoever condemns the nature of poetry condemns Scripture itself which uses the figural and allegorical language of the poets."

that "in most libraries there were copies of the *Dialogues* and *Homilies* of Gregory the Great."[32] The future pope Nicholas V, Tommaso Parentucelli, while employed as the household manager to the bishop of Bologna, was asked to prepare a bibliographical canon to be used in buying manuscripts for Cosimo de'Medici's library in the monastery of San Marco in Florence.[33] The only extant copy of Nicholas' list is a 1463 copy which includes Gregory's *Moralia, Dialogues, Pastoral Care, Homilies "ad populum,"* and the *Registrum.* [34] Ullman notes the significance of this copy because it "represents the Florentine humanists' idea of a collection assembled not for one person, but for general use".[35] Cosimo de'Medici (1389–1464) himself is said to have spent six months reading the *Moralia* of St. Gregory.[36] Traversari, writing to Niccolò Niccoli in 1424, noted that Lorenzo de'Medici, Cosimo's brother, had likewise taken up Gregory:[37]

> I am extremely pleased with our Lorenzo's ardent study of sacred letters. That he has read avidly the *Moralia* of St. Gregory, and admired it highly, is in my judgement an indication of a good and sound taste . . .

Certain humanist libraries, like those of Salutati and Niccoli, contained upwards of 800 books, with a great emphasis on the Church fathers. Niccoli's collection of patristic texts included thirty-four volumes of Augustine, eight of Jerome, six of Gregory, and other Latin and Greek fathers. The library of Pico della Mirandola (1463–94), considered the most extensive of its time with approximately 1,100 volumes, included Gregory's *Magna*

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[32] Pearl Kibre, "The Intellectual Interests Reflected in Libraries of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 7:3 (1946), 257–97. See also B.L. Ullman, "Petrarch's favorite books," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 54 (1923), 21–38, at 31. For the works of the Church fathers in Petrarch's library and his interest in them, see especially Pierre de Nolhac, "De patrum et medii aevi scriptorum codicibus in bibliotheca Petrarcae olim collectis," *Revue des bibliothèques* 2 (1892), 241–79.

[33] David Mycue, "Founder of the Vatican Library: Nicholas V or Sixtus IV?" *Journal of Library History* 16:1 (1981), 121–33, at 122; see also B.L. Ullman and Philip A. Stadter, *The Public Library of Renaissance Florence, Niccolò Niccoli, Cosimo de'Medici and the Library of San Marco* (Padua, 1972), p. 16.

[34] Giovanni Sforza, *La Patria, la famiglia e la giovinezza de Papa Niccolò V* (Lucca, 1884), pp. 359–81. After reference to the Old and New Testaments, authors are grouped by Greek fathers and commentaries (16 in all); Latin fathers (numbering 31), with separate listings of works for Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and other scholastics; works of Aristotle and other Greeks; Arab and Hebrew works in translation; Greek philosophers, mathematicians, rhetoricians, historians, and poets. Each category is arranged chronologically.

[35] Ullman and Stadter, *The Public Library*, p. 15.

[36] Kibre, "The Intellectual Interests," 279, n. 107.

[37] Stinger, *Humanism*, p. 34, quoting Traversari to Niccoli (1424).

Moralia, his *Dialogues*, and the *Homilies* (on gospels and Ezekiel) as part of his collection of "writings by popes".[38] The catalogue of the library of San Marco founded by Cosimo de'Medici indicates approximately fifteen volumes of Gregory's works, some in multiple copies. There were five copies of the *Moralia*, four of the *Dialogues*, two of the *Homilies on the Gospels* and the *Pastoral Care*, one volume each of the *Registrum* and *Homilies on the Gospels*. Other works included the *Life and Miracles of Gregory* by John the Deacon and Gregory's *Responsum* to Augustine of Canterbury. The book list reveals some interesting information on the acquisition and circulation of libraries in this period. After Niccoli and Salutati died, Cosimo de'Medici and others bought some of their books. The San Marco inventory notes, for example, that Gregory's responses to Augustine of Canterbury had belonged to Coluccio Salutati but came from Niccoli, and that a copy of the *Dialogues* belonged to Salutati, but came from Cosimo.[39]

The Quattrocento *Controversy over Gregory*

In spite of the humanist appreciation of Gregory's theological and moral authority, he became a source of conflict for some of the men of the Renaissance who tried to reconcile his Christian ascetic and moral authority with a view of Gregory inherited from the later Middle Ages: that of Gregory, the destroyer of pagan culture.[40] Master Gregory, author of *The Marvels of Rome*, lamented:[41]

> While Rome flourished, every visitor to the city worshipped it on bended knee, offering honour to Rome by worshipping its image. But after all the statues in Rome were pulled down and broken, blessed Gregory destroyed it in the following manner...

Various stories and legends about Gregory and the antiquities of Rome had been written down and in circulation since the 11th century. He was memorialized for "Christianizing" Hadrian's mausoleum (the Castel Sant'Angelo), for turning the Pantheon into a church, and for a miracle

[38] Kibre, "The Intellectual Interests," 258.

[39] Ullman and Stadter, *The Public Library*, Appendix IV, "San Marco's Catalogue," pp. 159–62.

[40] Gregory Tilmann Buddensieg, "Gregory the Great, the Destroyer of Pagan Idols: the History of a Medieval Legend Concerning the Decline of Ancient Art and Literature," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965), 44–64.

[41] Master Gregory, *The Marvels of Rome*, trans. John Osborne (Toronto, 1987), p. 19.

at Castel Sant'Angelo that delivered Rome from the plague, as depicted on the cover of this volume.[42] The three medieval *vitae* of Gregory by the Anonymous of Whitby, Paul the Deacon, and John the Deacon report his intercessory power in liberating the pagan Emperor Trajan from hell.[43]

In the 12th century, John of Salisbury praised Gregory as *doctor sanctissimus* in his *Policraticus* because of his vigilance against paganism, though John gives no source for his account.[44] Tilmann Buddensieg has analysed how the story of Gregory burning pagan books came to be joined to another legend based on *The Chronicle of the Emperors and Popes* by Martinus Polonus (d. 1278) in which Gregory had had all the heads and limbs of the statues in Rome broken so as not to multiply "old heresies".[45] The view of Gregory as a pope who attacked pagan literature and art would be perpetuated in other chronicles and in popular pilgrim guides to Rome, as well as the influential 13th-century *Golden Legend* of Jacques Voragine.[46] Master Gregory twice referred to the loss of Roman statues at the hands of Gregory the Great. He called the pope "blessed", but added that the destruction of some of the best pieces of classical art was performed at his bidding.[47] Well into the 16th century, Gregory, the authoritative father of the Church, and Gregory, the destroyer of classical art, existed side by side.

While some Renaissance authors would go so far as to conclude that all popes after Gregory inherited his anti-intellectual and anti-classical biases, others interpreted his life and writings differently.[48] Petrarch did

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[42] Richard Krautheimer, *Rome. Profile of a City 312–1308* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 73–75.

[43] Sarah Blake Wilk, "Donatello's 'Dovizia' as an Image of Florentine Political Propaganda," *Artibus et Historiae*, 7:14 (1986), 9–28, at 24–26. While walking in the Forum of Trajan, Gregory recalled the emperor's virtuous deed toward a widow which prompted his tears and prayers.

[44] Buddensieg, "Destroyer of Pagan Idols", 46, cites John of Salisbury's assertion that Gregory burned the books of the oracles and astrology from the Capitoline library, and then a lightning strike ignited and burned the library building and others around it to the ground as God's revenge on the viciousness of the reign of Emperor Lucius Antonius Commodus.

[45] Buddensieg, "Destroyer of Pagan Idols", 47.

[46] Buddensieg, "Destroyer of Pagan Idols", 47–8; Jacques Voragine, *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York, 1969).

[47] Master Gregory, *The Marvels of Rome*, trans. Osborne, p. 26: "Now I shall turn my attention to the marble statues, almost all of which were destroyed or toppled by blessed Gregory..."

[48] Buddensieg, "Destroyer of Pagan Idols", 50, notes that John of Salisbury (d. 1180); Martinus Polonus (d. 1278); Ptolemy of Lucca (1236–1327); the Dominicans Jacobus de Aquis (*c.*1328) and Bernardus Guidonis (1261/2–1331); and the Doge of Venice Andrea Dandolo

not engage in the debates over Gregory's complicity in the destruction of pagan art and literature. He understood the fathers of the Church to be in accord with the ancients, especially in their *docta pietas*, "learned asceticism".[49] Petrarch had purchased Gregory's *Homilies on the Gospels* and the *Dialogues* in Rome in 1337.[50] Nine years later in the second book of his *De vita solitaria* (1346), Petrarch drew on Gregory's *Dialogues, Homilies on Ezekiel, Moralia*, and letters, as well as other works such as Palladius' *Lausiac History*, and Voragine's *Golden Legend*, that praised saints who had escaped from the world and taken refuge in solitude or who offered examples by their lives.[51] Gregory had stressed the importance of publicizing miracles, but especially the lives of virtuous people, in the *Dialogues*. Petrarch urged his friend Francisco Nellio Florentino to read and "delight"

(1306–43) all approved of this portrayal of a Gregory who triumphed over paganism. Boccaccio, Ghiberti, and others are among those who lamented the loss of antiquity due to Gregory's actions. Others included Filippo Villani and Fazzio degli Uberti (d. 1367). In the 15th century, those who believed that Gregory had the heads of all statues broken included Guglielmo Capello of Ferrara, in his commentary on Fazio (1437); Giovanni Cavallini de Cerronibus; Cardinal Giovanni Dominici (1356–1419); Francesco da Fiano (d. pre-1425); Pomponio Leto and his circle. Cencio de'Rustici (1390–*c.*1445) extended this condemnation of the destruction of antiquities from Gregory to include all the popes. Those who doubted the truth of these stories about Gregory included Sicco Polenton (*c.*1414), Guarino Veronese (*c.*1450), and Bartolomeo Platina. Still, the anti-Gregory/anti-papal perspective reemerged in the writings of Raffaele Maffei (Volaterranus) 1506; in Raphael's letter to Leo X 1518/19; Pope Paul III (Alessandro Farnese); Giambattista Gelli (1550); and Vasari. As late as 1545 the view of Gregory as a destroyer of classical culture persisted, repeated in Pietro Aretino's letter to Michelangelo. The more moderate perspective on Gregory given by Bernardo Gamucci (1565) was again reversed by Pietro Angelio of Barga by 1589.

[49] Buddensieg, "Destroyer of Pagan Idols", 48 and Vessey, "Cities of the Mind," p. 51. Vessey has noted, "The main tendency of early humanist reappropriation of the fathers was to emphasize the latter's solidarity with 'classical' values, especially in the use of rhetoric and literary fictions. So much is clear from the repeated attempts to explain away Jerome's vision of a conflict between Christianity and Ciceronianism." Francis X. Murphy, *Patristic Heritage in the Renaissance and the Modern World*, eds Marie F. Porter and Norman Shaifer (Tappan, NY, 1990), p. 117, argues that Petrarch tries, "to amalgamate the ancient wisdom of his pagan poets and orators with the Christian creed within the framework of the Church . . ." More recently, W. Scott Blanchard in his article, "Petrarch and the Genealogy of Asceticism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:3 (2001), 401–23, at 403, has interpreted Petrarch's ascetic pursuits "as a strategy by which he could practice dissent in a more indirect way than had been characteristic of his more openly 'religious' predecessors".

[50] Murphy, *Patristic Heritage*, p. 113, and Pierre de Nolhac, "Le catalogue de la première bibliothèque de Pétrarque à Vaucluse," *Revue bibliothèques publication mensuelle* 16 (1906), 341–44.

[51] Murphy, *Patristic Heritage*, pp. 121, 123.

in Gregory.[52] He wrote to his brother, Gerard, a Carthusian monk, to read Gregory's *Dialogues*.[53] In *De otio religiosi* he writes:[54]

> Furthermore, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory and just about anyone down to this day who has lived a solitary and reclusive life for love of Christ, are all your leaders and companions and supporters and helpers. They offer themselves as examples to follow as a kind of staff when you are burdened or tired from your journey...

In contrast to those who argued that Jerome and Gregory condemned the vanities of secular learning, Petrarch took a pragmatic and philosophical view; Gregory criticized the "ornaments of pride of learning," not learning itself.[55]

> I do not forget that Benedict was praised by Gregory for deserting the studies which he had begun, to devote himself to a solitary and ascetic mode of life. Benedict, however, had renounced, not the poets especially, but literature altogether. Moreover, I very much doubt if his admirer [Gregory] would have been himself admired had he proceeded to adopt the same plan. It is one thing to have learned, another to be in the process of learning...

The programme of humanist studies emphasized reading the fathers of the Church as a way to understand Scripture as well as a way to personal piety.[56] Outside Italy, this programme is reflected in Spain in the work of Pero López de Ayala (1332–1407), part of the early Spanish Renaissance, who translated Gregory's *Moralia* into Spanish.[57] Helen Nader describes Ayala's concern for correct texts and translation. His second translation of the *Moralia* was an attempt to perfect what his first translation lacked. He compared different copies of the *Moralia* and "worked on the humanist assumptions that the original Latin had been clear and elegant and

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[52] de Nolhac, "De patrum et medii aevi scriptorum codicibus," 275.

[53] See Pietro-Paolo Gerosa, *Umanesimo cristiano del Petrarca: Influenza agostiniana, attinenze medievali* (Turin, 1966), p. 109. Gerosa offers a complete list of medieval authors read by Petrarch.

[54] Francisco Petrarch, *On Religious Leisure* (*De otio religioso*), ed. and trans. Susan S. Schreiner (New York, 2002), pp. 71–72.

[55] Petrarch's "Letter to Boccaccio," cited in James Harvey Robinson, *Petrarch. The First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters* (New York, 1899; repr. 1969), pp. 392–3.

[56] Stinger, *Humanism*, p. 8.

[57] Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350–1550*, ch. 3: "Pedro López de Ayala and the Formation of Mendoza Attitudes," (Rutgers, 1979), Library of Iberian Resources Online, http://libro.uca.edu/mendoza/msr3.htm (accessed 8-3-12); see also E.B. Strong, "Rimado de Palacio: López de Ayala's Rimed Confession," *Hispanic Review* 37:4 (1969), 439–51.

that obscurities must be attributable to errors in the medieval texts."[58] Ayala's poem, *Rimado de Palacio* (1404) was written in the vernacular and included meditations on life, death, original sin, the fleetingness of the world, and a critique of contemporary society. He used biblical themes from Gregory's *Moralia* as an allegory of the Great Schism in the Church, likening it to the ship of St. Peter being torn apart in a storm.

The Renaissance in Rome

The Renaissance papacy is typically associated with decadence and worldly affairs in the wake of the Avignon papacy, the Great Schism, and shortly thereafter, the fall of Constantinople. Petrarch and certain humanists, however, put their hope in the return of the papacy to Rome, which they saw as the historic centre of Christendom.[59] With regard to Petrarch's famous letter to Colonna, Jennifer Summit challenges the interpretation that Petrarch was dismissive of Rome's medieval past and looked backwards fondly to antiquity, lamenting its loss. Instead, for Petrarch, the decay of Rome was linked to the "pope's departure, and its reemergence would be accomplished with the pope's return".[60] The post-Avignon popes themselves hoped that Rome could be returned to its status as the head of the world.[61] The figure of Pope St. Gregory became a useful part of this plan.

Cult of Gregory in Rome

Pierre Jounel reminds us that the cult of Gregory in the Middle Ages had an early Roman as well as northern European focus. Though it was not a "popular" cult, it was found among the clerical hierarchy and monasteries.[62]

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[58] Nader, "Pedro López de Ayala and the Formation of Mendoza Attitudes," http://libro.uca.edu/mendoza/msr3.htm (accessed 8-3-12).

[59] Murphy, *Patristic Heritage*, p. 116. Petrarch, a critic of the Avignon papacy, advocated for "the emperor or the king to force the issue, and make the pope resume his proper station as spiritual lord of the universe". Gregory XI (*sedit* 1370–78) was the pope who returned the papacy to Rome in 1377. This happened shortly after Petrarch died.

[60] Jennifer Summit, "Topography as Historiography: Petrarch, Chaucer, and the Making of Medieval Rome," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30:2 (2000), 211–46 at 219.

[61] Krautheimer, *Rome. Profile of a City 312–1308*, pp. 151–52.

[62] Pierre Jounel, "Le culte de saint Grégoire le grand" in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al., pp. 671–80, at 673.

By the 9th century, Gregory's death date on 12 March was celebrated solemnly in the Vatican Basilica.[63] In the 14th century, there were at least six churches and numerous altars in Rome dedicated to Gregory the Great.[64] From the 15th to the 17th centuries, the cult of Gregory in Rome grew. Gregory had been buried in old St. Peter's Basilica, but the church had undergone numerous renovations and Gregory's tomb was moved several times. In 1464 Pope Pius II had Gregory's body translated to an altar of St. Peter's where it was placed with a recently acquired relic of the head of St. Andrew.[65] The connection between Gregory and Andrew is not so difficult to make. According to Robert Coates-Stephens, "An undated chronicle of Gregory's own monastery, copied in a 14th-century manuscript and used by Mabillon in his *Annales ordinis S. Benedicti*, states that prior to his election Gregory brought relics of Sts. Andrew and Luke to Rome, obtained when he was apocrisarius under the Emperor Tiberius II."[66] The relics were St. Andrew's arm and the head of St. Luke.[67] Gregory's monastery on the Caelian Hill had been dedicated to St. Andrew and his devotion is reflected in his gospel homilies and in his promotion of St. Andrew in the Roman liturgy.[68] In 1606, under different circumstances, Pope Paul V would have Gregory's relics placed in the chapel of Clement V near the entrance of the modern sacristy.[69]

In the 16th century the churches associated with Gregory's life in Rome were rebuilt or refurbished.[70] Construction began in 1527 of a new church dedicated to Gregory, the *Oratorio di S. Gregorio dei Muratori*, and was completed in 1598. Gregory's monastery was entrusted to the Camaldolese

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[63] Jounel, "Le culte," p. 673.

[64] Christian Hülsen, *Le Chiese di Roma nel Medio Evo* (Florence, 1927), pp. 157–502. Internet edition: http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/I/Gazetteer/Places/Europe/Italy/Lazio/Roma/Rome/churches/_Texts/Huelsen/HUECHI*/2/C.html (accessed 25-2-12). These included *S. Gregorio de Cortina, S. Gregorio de Gradellis, S. Gregorio de Grecis, S. Gregorio in Campo Martio, S. Gregorio in Palatio* and *S. Gregorio de Ponte Iudeorum*. The oldest known altar to Gregory is in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

[65] Jounel, "Le culte," p. 672.

[66] Robert Coates-Stephens, "S. Saba and the *Xenodochium de via nova*," *Revista di archeologia cristiana* 83 (2007), 223–56, at 228.

[67] Jean Mabillon, *Annales ordinis S. Benedicti occidentalium monachorum patriarchae*, 6 vols (Lucca, 1739), 1166.

[68] *Homily 2, Gregory the Great. Forty Gospel Homilies*, trans. David Hurst (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990), p. 13.

[69] Martin Heinzelmann, "Gregor, III. Kult und Verehrung," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 4, (Stuttgart—Weimar, 1989), p. 1666.

[70] Ferrucio Lombardi, *Roma, chiese, conventi, chiostri. Progetto per un inventario 313–1925* (Rome, 1993), p. 356.

monks in 1573 and in the mid-17th century it would be decorated with frescos from the life of Gregory.[71] In 1602, Cardinal Cesare Baronio (1538–1607) oversaw the reconstruction and began the decoration of Gregory's oratories of St. Barbara and St. Andrew; he constructed a chapel to St. Silvia. Cardinal Scipione Caffarelli Borghese completed the decoration and facades of the buildings after 1609.[72] The places most closely associated with Gregory in Rome might still have supported monastic life, but they were also monuments to Gregory's importance to the Church hierarchy.

In the late 16th century Gregory's importance for the narrative of the English Recusant community in exile was reflected in the martyr murals of the English College in Rome, Circignani's *Ecclesiae anglicanae trophae.*[73] This mural of 1584 emphasized the antiquity of England's links with the papacy through Gregory's mission to the Anglo-Saxons.

Pope Nicholas V (1447–55) is a key figure in the rebuilding programme in 15th-century Rome and the attempt to return Rome to the centre of Christendom after the "Babylonian captivity" and schism. His patronage of humanist literary efforts to translate and publish patristic texts parallels his own efforts toward the renewal and rebuilding of the city. Although Pope Martin V (1417–31) had begun the restoration of St. John's Lateran Church in the 1420s, Nicholas undertook a much grander scheme of rebuilding, focusing on Rome's lucrative pilgrimage industry, some of which was tied to interest in Gregory.[74] Medieval texts of the *Libri indulgentiarum*, such as the *Stacyons of Rome* (*c.*1370), listed itineraries to the major churches and shrines of Rome and the indulgences attached to them.[75] John Capgrave's *Ye Solace of Pilgrims* (1450) included many references for English pilgrims to the saints of Rome whom Gregory discussed in his *Dialogues.*[76] Nicholas V renovated Gregory the Great's forty stational churches. He also restored the Castel Sant'Angelo, the site of a miracle associated with Gregory and St. Michael.[77] Nicholas' pragmatic view of supporting pilgrimage by

[71] Ibid., p. 132. Decoration to the altar to the Virgin was added in the Chiesa di S. Gregorio Magno al Celio Monasterio dei Camaldolesi. This church was built on the original site of Pope Agapitus' library and had been reconstructed in the 12th and 13th centuries.

[72] Edizioni Camaldoli, *Chiesa di San Gregorio e i tre oratori* (Rome, n.d.), p. 2.

[73] Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community 1535–1603* (Aldershot, 2002), 175–239.

[74] Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: a History of the Popes* (New Haven, 1997), p. 133.

[75] Judith F. Champ, *The English Pilgrimage to Rome: a Dwelling For the Soul* (Bodmin, 2000), pp. 42–43.

[76] Champ, *The English Pilgrimage*, pp. 42, 50. See also John Capgrave, *Ye Solace of Pilgrims. A Description of Rome circa A.D. 1450*, ed. C.A. Mills (Oxford, 1911).

[77] Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, IN, 1998), p. 34.

rebuilding churches as well as roads and bridges in Rome helped to reinvigorate the cult of Gregory in Rome.[78]

Humanist Patristic Studies in the 15th Century

By the mid-15th century the centre of humanist studies had shifted from Florence to Rome.[79] Nicholas V collaborated with his friend, and later cardinal, the Greek Bishop of Nicaea, John Bessarion, to translate Latin and Greek classical and patristic literature as part of the plan to restore prestige to Rome as a centre of Christian culture. His collection of manuscripts and books laid the foundation for the Vatican Library.[80] Nicholas seems to have consciously associated himself with Gregory. His description of buildings as "sermons in stone" echoed Gregory's letter to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, in which Gregory chastised the bishop for smashing images that he feared people were worshipping as idols: "... for a picture is provided in churches for the reason that those who are illiterate may at least read by looking at the walls what they cannot read in books."[81] Like Gregory's mission north to the Anglo-Saxons, Nicholas sent "preachers throughout Europe to preach reconciliation and reform" in the Jubilee year of 1450. He hoped that a plenary indulgence would both revive personal piety and attract pilgrims to Rome.[82]

Gregory's standing in 15th-century Rome remained high among its humanists even if questions about his attitude toward pagan culture continued to be raised.[83] He appeared in the work of papal historians Bartolomeo Platina and Jacopo Zeno, and was referred to in liturgical collections.[84] Alison Frazier notes that Giovanni Garzoni (1419–1505), a Bolognese humanist in Rome, was the only one at the time to revise Jacobus Voragine's account of Gregory the Great.[85] She explains that Garzoni

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[78] Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, p. 133.

[79] Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, pp. 5–7.

[80] Mycue, "Founder of the Vatican Library", 121–33.

[81] Gregory the Great, *Reg.* 9.209, trans. John R.C. Martyn, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, 3 vols (Toronto, 2004), 2:674 (CCSL 140A:768, ll. 12–14): "Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui litteras nesciunt saltem in parietibus uidendo legant, quae legere in codicibus non ualent." See also Gregory's second letter to Serenus, *Reg.* 11.10 (CCSL 140A:873–6).

[82] Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, pp. 139–40.

[83] Buddensieg, "Destroyer of Pagan Idols", 50.

[84] Alison K. Frazier, *Possible Lives. Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York, 2005), p. 203.

[85] Ibid., pp. 202–11.

undertook the *Vita Gregorii* for personal reasons. During a serious illness around 1478, he made a vow that if healed he would rewrite the life of Gregory. Garzoni was also one of Gregory's defenders on the question of his role in the destruction of pagan monuments.[86] In another place Garzoni chided the critics of miracle stories in saint's *Lives* by comparing them to the "untrustworthiness" of pagan histories that included apparitions and fantastic feats of strength.[87]

Gregory in Art (1400s–1500s)

In the 15th century aspects of Gregory's thought and theology on purgatory, penance, and the miraculous appear in art. A long bibliography accompanies the topic of Gregory the Great in art:[88] for this discussion a few representative examples will have to suffice.

Simon Marmion's (1425–89) elaborate sequence of illustrations on the "Vision of Tondal" (*c.*1470)[89] drew inspiration from Gregory's depictions of the afterlife in the *Dialogues*, and the earliest printed edition circulated together with a copy of Gregory's *Dialogues*.[90] Domenico Ghirlandaio's (1449–94) fresco in the Collegiate Church in San Gimignano portrayed Gregory in the papal tiara appearing to St. Fina to announce her death.[91] In effect, Gregory became a saint like one he described in the *Dialogues*. In their famous *Book of Hours*, copied and illustrated for the Duke of Berry (*c.*1412–16), the Limbourg brothers showed Gregory in papal regalia in

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[86] Ibid., pp. 206–10.

[87] Ibid., p. 201.

[88] Robert Godding, *Bibliografia di Gregorio Magno (1890–1989)* (Rome, 1990), s.v. "Iconografia," pp. 277–83. This list has been updated in Robert Godding, "Tra due anniversari: Gregorio Magno alla luce degli studi recenti (1991–2003)," in *Gregorio Magno nel XIV centenario della morte: Convegno internazionale, Roma, 22–25 ottobre 2003* (Roma, 2004), pp. 89–106.

[89] Los Angeles, Getty Museum, MS 30, attr. Simon Marmion, "Les Visions du chevalier Tondal," Flemish and French, Ghent and Valenciennes, *c.*1470 painted for Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy. The image was exhibited in *Illuminating the Renaissance. The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe*, at Royal Academy of Arts, London, 29 November–22 February 2004.

[90] Nigel Palmer, "Illustrated Printed Editions of The Visions of Tondal from the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries," in Thomas Kren (ed.), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion, and The Visions of Tondal* (Malibu, CA, 1992), pp. 157–80, at 158.

[91] Domenico Ghirlandaio, "Apparition of St. Gregory to St. Fina. Announcement of the death of St. Fina," Chapel of Santa Fina, Collegiate Church, San Gimignano, accessed online at http://www.paesionline.it/toscana/san_gimignano/foto_dettaglio.asp?filename=4661_san_gimignano_apparizione_di_s_gregorio_a_s_fina_annuncio_della_morte (accessed 8-3-12).

"The Procession of Saint Gregory" at Castel Sant'Angelo. They placed this illustration at the beginning of the section on Litanies since it was also known as "The Great Litany" or "Great Supplication".[92]

Images of Gregory offer another perspective as to how he was perceived in the era of the Renaissance. The 9th-century *vita* of Gregory by John the Deacon described a painting of Gregory with no beard that John claimed he saw in Rome. If Renaissance artists were concerned with Gregory's appearance, they disregarded John as a witness. Philipp Fehl has argued that Roman images of Gregory in the Renaissance almost always showed him clean-shaven.[93] It has been suggested that in Raphael's (1490–1527) *Disputa* the model for his Gregory the Great was the warrior Pope Julius II.[94] Fehl argues that Raphael played on an image of Gregory already established in Rome "by joining piety with grandeur" in the face.[95]

The Mass of St. Gregory and the Man of Sorrows remained popular subjects for artists well into the 16th century. Frazier notes that it became popular among humanists to request that a "Mass of St. Gregory" be said for their souls after death.[96] Hieronymus Bosch (*c.*1510) portrayed an uncharacteristically spare, austere altar scene, with a tonsured Gregory at the altar where the Man of Sorrows appears. Two secular figures, possibly Bosch's patron and the patron's wife, flank Gregory while monks stand off on the sidelines. Bosch omitted the papal tiara.[97] In this period, Gregory is also almost always portrayed as pope with the tiara and *pallium*. It is not surprising that artists commissioned by popes or cardinals would emphasize his papal status. In the 1539 Aztec featherwork image, a New World gift intended for Pope Paul III (1534–49), Gregory is also tonsured, but the papal tiara rests on the altar to his left.[98] By the 1540s the image of Gregory in the papal tiara was so pervasive that Martin Luther pointedly criticized depictions of him in contemporary papal regalia. He was not

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92 Jean Longmon and Raymond Cazelles, "The Procession of Saint Gregory," in *The Très Riches Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry*, trans. Victoria Benedict (New York, 1969; repr. New York, 1989), p. 199. The original manuscript and image of "The Procession of St. Gregory" is held at Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 65, fols 71v–72r. See the cover of this volume.

93 Philipp Fehl, "Raphael's Reconstruction of the Throne of St. Gregory the Great," *The Art Bulletin* 55:3 (1973), 373–79, at 373, 378.

94 See Philipp Fehl and Paul Künzle, "Zur obersten der drei Tiaren auf Raffaels 'Disputa'," *Römische Quartalschrift* 57 (1962), 226–49, at 231–32.

95 Fehl, "Raphael's Reconstruction," 379.

96 Frazier, *Possible Lives*, p. 204.

97 Hieronymous Bosch, *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi* (*c.*1510), Madrid, Prado, online at: http://www.all-art.org/early_renaissance/bosch12.html (accessed 10-3-12).

98 Pierce et al., *Painting a New World*, p. 97; the work coincided with Paul III acknowledging the Indians' lawful access to the Eucharist.

particularly concerned with the inaccuracy of portraying Gregory in the three-tiered tiara, which only came into use in the 14th century, but with portraying Gregory as pope at all. In Luther's understanding of Church history, Gregory was the bishop, not the pope, of Rome.[99]

Gregory and the Reformation: Erasmus and Luther

Certain principles about the fathers of the Church as articulated by Petrarch and the 14th-century Florentines remained common ground for humanists throughout the 15th and early 16th centuries. The emphasis on the early Church fathers in opposition to the speculative scholastic theologians remained most important, as did the ideal of the "learned ascetic" which the early Greek and Latin fathers represented for them. The philological goal of perfecting various texts of the fathers by collecting, comparing, editing, and making them more accessible through translations and publication was also continued by later humanists. Erasmus' prolific editing and publishing projects and the output of printing houses at the time attest to this. An interesting example of a composite text that links the early Church fathers with the *studia humanitatis* contains Spanish translations of Petrarch's *Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul* and Gregory's *Dialogues*.[100] The context for this work is 15th and 16th-century Spanish humanism and reform with connections to a Hieronymite community in Spain.[101]

From the 9th to the 16th centuries, Gregory's standing as an authoritative father of the Church was unquestioned. On the eve of the Reformation, however, the work of the northern humanist Desiderius Erasmus signaled a shift in the perception and significance of Gregory.

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[99] Martin Luther, "Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil" (1545), in *Luther's Works*, vol. 41: *Church and Ministry* 3, ed. Eric W. Gritsch (Philadelphia, 1966), p. 291.

[100] Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library: Petrarch, *De los remedios contra prospera y aduersa fortuna*, trans. Francisco de Madrid (Saragossa, 1518) and *Los Diálogos del bienaventurado papa sant Gregorio sacados del latin en Romance: nuevamente por el reuerendo Padre Fray Gonzalo de Ocanna* (Toledo, 1514).

[101] The topic of Gregory in the works of Church reformers in Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries, particularly the figures of Francisco Ximénes de Cisneros (1436–1517) and Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540), needs more attention than is possible here. The great example of a humanist library in Spain is Phillip II's Escorial in the latter half of the 16th century. Vernacular and Latin texts of the major Church fathers as well as humanists were published out of several centres in Spain. See Alejandro Coroleu, "Printing Sacred Texts in Early Modern Barcelona (1480–1530)," *The Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 86:6 (2009), 743–50.

Like Petrarch, Erasmus (*c.*1466–1536) was committed to early patristic theology not simply as an alternative to scholasticism for its own sake, but as a truer reflection of a correct understanding of Christianity.[102] He promoted the study of the fathers of the Church in their original languages, yet worked to make them accessible in translation to those not skilled in Latin or Greek. He was personally involved in the editing and publishing of the works of Augustine (1506) and Ambrose (1492) with the publisher Johannes Amerbach and then with Johann Froben who took over Amerbach's press in 1513.[103] In his edition of St. Jerome, whom he preferred over Augustine, Erasmus included a *vita*, which he did not do for his other subjects. He believed it was needed in this case because, like so many other early Christian authors, Jerome's teachings had been distorted by the fragmented nature of their dissemination in sentences, *summae*, treatises, and *specula*.[104]

Yet for all his zeal to edit the texts of the Church fathers and Amerbach's goal to publish them all, Erasmus omitted Gregory. For Erasmus, the *veteres theologi* were the Greek and Latin fathers of the early Christian centuries and he excluded Gregory, Isidore, and Bede from this company.[105] In the introduction to his *Life of St. Jerome*, Erasmus disparaged the tradition that maintained the "four Doctors" of the church because he saw it as based on "complacency" and "lack of judgment":[106]

> ... it is worthwhile listening to the opinion of that learned crowd which reduces everything to a set number. It was an attractive idea to have four Doctors of the church and likewise four senses of Holy Scripture, to correspond of course with the four evangelists. To Gregory they assign tropology, to Ambrose allegory, to Augustine anagogy, and to Jerome, to assign him something, they leave the liberal and grammatical sense ...[107]

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[102] See R. Schoeck and Beatrice Corrigan (eds), *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto—Buffalo, 1974).

[103] R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson (eds), *The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 298–445 (1514–16)*, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 3; trans. Margaret Mann Phillips (Toronto—Buffalo, 1982), p. 4 on.

[104] Nikolaus Staubach, "*Memores pristinae perfectionis*. The Importance of the Church Fathers for the *Devotio Moderna*," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers* 1, ed. Irena Backus, pp. 405–69, at 450.

[105] Ibid., p. 451.

[106] Ibid., p. 450.

[107] Desiderius Erasmus, "The Edition of St. Jerome," *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 61, "Patristic Scholarship, The Edition of Jerome," eds and trans. James F. Brady and John C. Olin (Toronto—Buffalo, 1992), p. 52.

Erasmus knew Gregory's works,[108] but they do not inform his own to any great extent. He cited Gregory infrequently or through second-hand sources. In his "Paraphrase on Mark" he quoted a passage from Gregory's *Moralia* by way of Thomas Aquinas' *Catena aurea* (1265) or Commentary on the Gospels, a "golden chain" of Church authorities.[109] In a letter to Erard de la Marck (1519), he cited Gregory's authority through a popularly quoted text of Gregory's *Responsa* to Augustine of Canterbury on sex and marriage that circulated through the *Decretum*.[110]

Unlike Petrarch, Erasmus disparaged the value of *vitae sanctorum* and miracle stories with which Gregory was so greatly associated. He respected Gregory's "learned piety," but not the excesses he perceived in writings on the saints.[111]

> Our predecessors were convinced that they should employ properly fashioned stories to lead the pious and law-abiding Christian in doing good... There is a vulgar credulity that is so deeply ingrained in mortal minds, that they listen more willingly to fiction than to fact, and give assent to fancy rather than to truth.

In contrast to Erasmus, the leading churchmen and humanists in England, John Colet (1467–1519), Thomas More (1478–1535), and John Fisher (1459–1535)—all correspondents of Erasmus—remained constant in their use, understanding and especially reverence for Gregory. Before the controversy over Henry VIII's marriage in the late 1520s and 1530s absorbed and ultimately silenced forever John Fisher and Thomas More, their ideas reflected a continuity with the tradition begun by the Anonymous of Whitby and reinforced by Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* that Gregory's mission to the Anglo-Saxons forever made him "our Gregory" and the English, his people.

Both Fisher and More cited all of Gregory's writings in their works.[112] Fisher accords Gregory a higher status as an authority than Augustine in a dispute over the identity of Mary Magdalene in the gospels (John 12:1–8, John 20:11, Luke 7:36–50). He based his interpretation on Gregory's view

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[108] Little, "Calvin's Appreciation," 148.

[109] Desiderius Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 49, "Paraphrase on Mark," trans. Erika Rummel (Toronto, 1988), p. 114.

[110] Desiderius Erasmus, "Letter to Erard de la Marck," *The Correspondence of Erasmus*. vol. 6, *Letters 842 to 992, 1518 to 1519*, eds R.A.B. Mynors, D.F.S. Thomson, and P.G. Bietenholz (Toronto—Buffalo, 1982), p. 245.

[111] Murphy, *Patristic Heritage*, p. 156.

[112] Thomas M.C. Lawler, Germain P. Marc'Hadour, and Richard Marius (eds), *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (New Haven—London, 1963–90).

that the Marys named in the three texts were one and the same person. Unlike the humanists who praised the Greek fathers, Fisher maintained an old-fashioned distrust of them, and notes that Gregory's authority trumped any of the Greek fathers because in the past the Greek Church was prone to error.[113] On top of this, he claimed that Gregory was a great preacher and exegete, but "above all he was the Bishop of Rome", and even Jerome had submitted himself to Pope Damasus.[114]

Thomas More, like Fisher, was influenced by Gregory, whom he regarded as second only to Augustine.[115] Like Fisher, More "fell back onto the patristic interpretations as a guide to his own use of Scripture".[116] In his discussion of the seven deadly sins—pride, envy, wrath, covetousness, gluttony, sloth and lechery—More followed the order "established in the *Moralia* of Gregory the Great [which was] widely used throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance".[117] Gregory's works became important for More's later refutations of Luther. In his "Response to Luther" (1523) and in his "Dialogue Concerning Heresies" (1528), he repeated the humanist emphasis on Gregory as a learned and holy Doctor of the Church whose sanctity, as well as the celibacy of all the early fathers, he contrasted with the "new sect" of reformers and their wives.[118]

The 1520s were a turning-point for the Lutheran critique of the Church. After the Leipzig Debates (1519) and the papacy's condemnation of Luther in the Bull *Exsurge Domini* (1520), theological positions hardened, language became more militant, and any shared common ideas among the humanists ended.[119] Lief Grane compares this change with the move

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[113] Walter L. Moore, "The Role of the Fathers in the Three Marys Controversy," in *Auctoritas Patrum*, eds Lief Grane et al., 1:129–41, at 134. See also Guy Bedouelle, "Attacks on the Biblical Humanism of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples," in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*, ed. Erika Rummel (Leiden, 2008), pp. 117–41.

[114] Moore, "The Role of the Fathers", p. 134.

[115] Germain Marc'Hadour, "Fathers and Doctors of the Church", in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, eds Lawler et al., 6:526–35, at p. 531.

[116] Richard C. Marius, "Thomas More and the Early Church Fathers," *Traditio* 24 (1968), 379–407, at 381.

[117] Katharine Gardiner Rodgers, "The Seven Deadly Sins," in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 1, eds Anthony S.G. Edwards et al. (New Haven—London, 1963; repr. 1997), pp. lxxxv and 262, n. 153. More's treatise, "The Four Last Things," was left unfinished in 1522.

[118] Marc'Hadour, "Fathers and Doctors of the Church," p. 531. Thomas More, "Response to Luther," trans. Scholastica Mandeville, in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 5, ed. John M. Headley (New Haven—London, 1969), p. 781.

[119] Lief Grane, "Some Remarks on the Church Fathers in the First Years of the Reformation 1516–1520," in *Auctoritas Patrum*, eds Lief Grane et al., 1:21–32.

from Erasmus' *philosophia christiana* to Martin Luther's emphasis on *fides Christi*.[120] While Petrarch and Erasmus saw the fathers of the Church as integral to scriptural interpretation and to reform of the Church, for the Protestant reformers the fathers, with a few exceptions, were seen as part of the problem; they should be respected for their faith, they could be useful at times, but they were fallible and at worst had done a disservice to the Church by their scriptural interpretations and theology.[121] Philip Melanchthon shifted the origin of the decline of the Church from Gregory's papacy to his successor, Boniface III.[122] It was Gregory, however, who brought in purgatory, private masses, the saints, and miracles, to the detriment of the Church.

By the 1540s the authority of the Church fathers was diminished and views on Gregory became as polarized as the historical context in which they were discussed. The Catholic Reformation continued to use Gregory to underscore the link between the antiquity of the Church and the papacy in Rome. Pope Gregory XIII (1572–85) intentionally modeled his papacy on that of Gregory the Great.[123] While Protestantism would demote the authority of Gregory, the University of Alcalá in Spain sealed Gregory's place as an authority in its promotion of the cult of the four Doctors of the Church—Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, and Ambrose. In Tudor and Stuart England Gregory's papacy became a battleground for Catholic and Protestant polemic. English Recusants in the late 16th and 17th centuries held fast to the idea of "our Gregory" in their institutions abroad. At his condemnation hearing for treason in 1535, Thomas More quoted Gregory in his repudiation of Henry's right to break with the papacy. It is both a lament and reminder to the court: [124]

> No more might this Realm of England refuse obedience to the see of Rome than might the child refuse obedience to his own natural father. For as St. Paul said of the Corinthians, "I have regenerated you, my children in Christ", so St. Gregory, pope of Rome, from whom we first received the Christian

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[120] Grane, "Some Remarks on the Church Fathers", pp. 22–23.

[121] Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis chapters 15–20," (1535–45) in *Luther's Works*, vol. 3, eds John Lehman and Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, 1961), p. 350.

[122] Peter Fraenkel, *Testimonia Patrum. The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon* (Geneva, 1961), p. 96; John M. Headley, *Luther's View of the Church* (New Haven—London, 1963), pp. 190–94.

[123] Nicola Courtright, *The Papacy and the Art of Reform in Sixteenth-century Rome: Gregory XIII's Tower of the Winds in the Vatican* (Cambridge, 2003).

[124] Germain P. Marc'Hadour, "Saint Grégoire le grand et saint Thomas More," in *Grégoire le grand*, eds Jacques Fontaine et al., pp. 621–34, at 630, n. 4 (modified translation).

> faith by St. Augustine his messenger, might truly say of us Englishmen, "You are my children, because I have given you everlasting salvation, a far higher and better inheritance than any carnal father can leave to his children, and by regeneration made you my spiritual children in Christ."

The men of the Renaissance and early Reformation found much to admire in Gregory. Petrarch and others found his exegetical writings, his faith, and his sanctity to reflect the best of the early Church fathers and an inspiration for contemporary Church reform. Yet certain negative impressions of Gregory persisted, especially that of the Pope Gregory who destroyed classical antiquities.

In the century to come, Gregory remained a figure who was never far from the discussion of the new questions that the Protestant and Catholic Reformations raised. For the Catholic hierarchy Pope Gregory's papacy and teachings remained important to its attempt to reclaim Christendom. For the developing Anglican faith which still admired that bishop of Rome, Gregory needed to be wrested from his papal trappings and medieval superstition. The construction and reconstruction of Gregory the Great was not yet over.

APPENDIX

PRELIMINARY LIST OF INCUNABULA AND EARLY PRINTED LATIN BOOKS OF GREGORY THE GREAT *C.*1460–1619[125]

Commentum super Cantica canticorum
Cologne: Ulrich Zell, 1465–73
Cologne: Bartholomaeus de Unkel, 1480
Paris: Ulrich Gering and Berthold Rembolt, 1498–99, 1509
Basel: Michael Furter, 1496
Paris: Rembolt and Waterloes, *c.*1509–10
Paris: Iohannes Barbier and Jean Petit, 1511
Lyons: Simon Bevilaqua, 1516
Venice: Melchior Sessas et Petrus de Rauanis, 1519

Dialogorum libri quatuor
Mainz: Peter Schoeffer, 1470
Strassburg: Heinrich Eggestein, 1472–74
Cologne: Ulrich Zell, 1473
Augsburg: Johann Bämler at the Monastery of SS. Ulrich and Afra, 1473 and 1476
Paris: Ulrich Gering, 1479
Augsburg: J. Wiener, 1479
Cologne: Bartholomaeus de Unkel, *c.*1480, 1481, 1482
Strassburg: Jacob Eber, 1481, 1484
Paris: Georg Wolf, 1490
Venice: Hieronymus de Paganinis, 1492
Paris: Ulrich Gering and Berthold Rembolt, 1494 (1495), 1508, 1513
Basel: Michael Furter, 1496
Paris: Jean Petit, 1511
Paris: B. Rembolt, 1513
Venice: Joannes Rubeus Vercellensis, 1514
Lyons: Simon Beuilaqua, 1516
Venice: Petrus Leichtenstein, 1520
Douai: Baltazar Belleri [Bellère], 1596
Ingolstad: n.p., 1602
Cologne: Bernardi Gualteri, 1611

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[125] Where possible the place names and publishers have been translated into the vernacular but may reflect inconsistencies in the original publication.

Homiliae XL super Evangeliis [*Homiliae de diversis evangelii lectionibus*]
Augsburg: Günther Zainer, 1473
Cologne: Bartholomaeus de Unkel, 1475
Paris: Ulrich Gering, Martin Crantz and Michael Friburger, 1475
Paris: Georg Wolff, 1491
Venice: Peregrinus Pasquale [and D. Bertochus], 1493
Paris: Ulrich Gering and Berchtold Rembolt, 1502, 1508
Antwerp: Theod. Martinus [Thierry Martens] Alost., 1509
Burgensi: Fredericum alemanum de Basilea, 1510
Paris: Jean Petit, 1511
Lyons: Simon Bevilaqua, 1516
Paris: B. Rembolt, 1518

Homiliae super Ezechielem
Brussels: Fratres vitae communis, *c.*1476–77
Paris: Georg Wolf, 1489–91
Basel: Michael Furter, 1496
Paris: Udalrich Gering and Bertold Rembolt, 1502
Paris: Jean Petit, 1511
Paris: Berthold Rembolt, 1512
Lyons: Simon Bevilaqua, 1515
Paris: Ulrich Gering, or G. Wolff, n.d.

Moralia, sive Expositio in Job
Basel: Berthold Ruppel, 1468, 1470
Nuremberg: Johann Sensenschmidt, 1471
Rome: Sanctum Marcum (Vitus Puecher), 1475
Cologne: Conrad Winters de Homborch, 1475, 1476, 1477, 1479
Venice: Reynaldus de Nouimagio, 1480
Paris: Udalrich Gering and Berthold Rembolt, 1495
Basel: Nicolaus Kesler, 1496, 1503
Venice: Andreas Torresanus de Asula, 1496
Brescia: Angelus Britannicus, 1498
Salamanca: Juan de Gysser [Hans Gysser de Seligenstadt], 1508
Basel: Ludovic Hornken, 1513, 1514
Lyons: Jacob Mareschal, 1518
Paris: François Regnault, 1521
Lyons: Jacobi Giunti, 1530

Liber regulae pastoralis
Mainz: Johann Fust and Peter Schöffer, 1460
Cologne: Ulrich Zell, 1470
Nuremberg: Johann Sensenschmidt, 1471
Basel: Martin Flach, 1472
Cologne: n.p., 1472
Albi: Johann Neumeister, 1478
Cologne: Conrad Winters, de Homborch, 1482
Venice: Johann Herolt, 1492
Venice: Hieronymus de Paganinis, 1492
Paris: Georg Wolf, 1492
Paris: Ulrich Gering and Berthold Rembolt, 1495, 1498
Argentiae: Jordanus de Quedlinburg, 1496
Basel: Michael Furter, 1496
Strasburg: Georg Husner, 1496
Rome: Johann Besicken and Jacobus de Mazochius, 1506
Salamanca: Juan de Gysser [Hans Gysser de Seligenstadt], 1508
Paris: in Lilio aureo vici divi Jacobi Parrhisiis, 1511
Paris: n.p., 1512
Brescia: Damian Turlino, 1550s, 1565
Louvain: Hieronymus Wellaeus, 1562
Rouen: Jean Crevel, 1618
Albi: Johann Neumeister, n.d.
Zwolle: Pieter van Os, n.d.

Liber epistolarum
Augsburg: Günther Zainer, 1472, 1474–76, 1477
Augsburg: J. Wiener, 1479
Venice: Lazarus de Soardis, 1504
Paris: Udalrich Gering and Berthold Rembolt, 1508

Opera Omnia
Paris: B. Rembolt, 1518, 1533, 1542
Paris: François Regnault, 1521
Paris: Claude Chevallon, 1523, 1533
Lyons: Mareschal, 1539
Lyons: n.p., 1540
Lyons: A. Vincen., 1540
Paris: Charlotte [Carola] Guillard, 1542

Basel: Froben, 1544, 1550, 1551, 1564
Lyons: Hugo à Porta, 1551
Paris: Jean de Roigny, 1551
Paris: Audoën Parvus (Petit), 1551
Paris: Charlotte [Carola] Guillard, widow of Claude Chevellon, and Guilelmus des Boys, 1551
Paris: Gulielmus Merlin, Guilelmus des Boys and Sébastien Niuelle, 1562
Basel: Hieronymus Froben et Nicolaus Episcopus, 1564
Paris: Sébastien Nivelle, 1571
Venice: Bartholomaeus Rota, 1571
Antwerp: widow and heir of Ioannis Stesij, 1571–72
Antwerp: sons of Arnoldi Birckmanni, 1572
Venice: Dominic de Farris, 1583
Paris: Compagnie du grand navire, 1586, 1619
Rome: n.p., 1588–93
Paris: n.p., 1605, 1619
Rome: Apostolic Camera, 1608–13
Antwerp: Peter and Johann Beller, 1615
Antwerp: Johann Keerberg, 1615, 1619

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